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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 37th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 14 December 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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01-69744 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Part IV: International cooperation for development

Section 11B: International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (A/56/6/Add.1 (Section 11B) and A/56/7/Add.3)

1. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's fourth report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/7/Add.3), said that the proposed programme budget for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) for 2002-2003 had been presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/6/Add.1 (Sect. 11B)) in accordance with the procedures and administrative arrangements outlined by the Advisory Committee and endorsed by the General Assembly in its decision 53/411 B of 18 December 1998. The estimated total resources indicated by the Secretary-General amounted to 61,365,700 Swiss francs, of which Sw F 30,632,700 were intended for 2002 and Sw F 30,733,000 for 2003. On the basis of an exchange rate of Sw F 1.76 to US$ 1, the provision requested for the United Nations contribution for the biennium 2002-2003 would amount to US$ 17,203,350. In paragraph 9 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the proposal for 148 regular budget posts and, in paragraph 13, approval of the proposed total resources. The budget for the International Trade Centre (ITC) was reviewed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as by the General Assembly, and the WTO procedure was described in paragraph 5 of the Advisory Committee's report.

2. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) sought an explanation for the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General one week after the scheduled ending of the main part of the session. His delegation was concerned that over one third of the posts that had been proposed for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO were in the Division of Administration. He would appreciate further details of why so many posts were required for support staff with no direct involvement in programme work. With regard to the programme of work, objectives and expected accomplishments, additional information concerning the division of labour between the four Divisions of ITC would also be welcome.

3. **Mr. Stoffer** (United States of America), with reference to paragraph 11B.11, asked why a provision was needed in the regular budget for expenditure that had previously been met by a voluntary contribution from the Government of Switzerland. His delegation shared Canada's concern at the number of posts required for the Division of Administration. Lastly, he failed to understand the need for consultants and how the estimated requirements of Sw F 828,600 had been arrived at.

4. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), with reference to the timing of the administrative arrangements, said that ITC would prepare a report on the lessons learned during the current phase of the revised schedule for submission to the Advisory Committee and WTO during the first quarter of 2002. The Advisory Committee would review the process and make further comments at that time.

5. **Mr. Smadja** (International Trade Centre) said that no new posts had been created in the Division of Administration. The posts referred to in the report were reclassifications that had followed an independent review. With regard to the presentation of the programme of work, a breakdown of the output of individual programmes had been given rather than a breakdown of the work done by the various Divisions, because such an approach had been requested. In response to allegations that the Division of Administration was overstaffed, he drew attention to the wide range of services it provided for all the other Divisions. It administered the ITC building, space in which was also used by several other offices, and ensured that ITC constituted a semi-autonomous organization. Consideration was already being given to the possibility of sharing some of the services provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), which could lead to a reduction in costs. The justification for consultants had been given in section A.11B.6 of the report. With regard to the transfer from extrabudgetary to regular budget resources referred to by the representative of the United States of America, he drew attention to the wide-ranging impact of the Executive Forum, which had been previously funded by the Government of Switzerland. Since the Forum had a direct impact on programme development, it was

more appropriate to allocate extrabudgetary resources to operations in the field.

6. **Mr. Khamis** (Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the late issuance of the report of the Secretary-General had been due in part to the difficulty of carrying out a joint review by WTO and the General Assembly. Two years earlier, a disagreement had arisen between WTO and the General Assembly over approval of the budget, which had highlighted the need for in-depth consultations and the fact that one body could not take action without the understanding of the other. In paragraph 5 of its report, the Advisory Committee pointed out that the WTO Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration had not taken a decision until 23 November 2001. As a result, the time available to the Secretary-General to review the proposals of WTO and submit his report had been very limited.

7. **Mr. Stoffer** (United States of America) asked why a total of Sw F 585,000 would be required to pay consultants to assist with matters related to the Executive Forum. Given the importance of the Forum, it would be more appropriate for related work to be conducted by regular members of staff.

8. **Mr. Smadja** (International Trade Centre) said that the Forum covered a number of topics for which ITC did not have the relevant expertise and national experts were therefore needed as consultants.

9. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) requested a breakdown of the work done by the Division of Administration. He noted that the report of the Secretary-General did not follow the usual format based on tables and did not provide data on expenditures for the biennium 1998-1999.

10. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should consider and make appropriate recommendations on section 11B of the proposed programme budget in the context of informal consultations.

11. *It was so decided.*

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (A/56/7/Add.5 and A/C.5/56/25)

12. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the sixth report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/7/Add.5), said that the total estimated requirements of $29,519,400 would be charged against the $93.7 million provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The potential estimated charges against the provision for special political missions in 2002, which were listed in the annex to the report of the Advisory Committee, amounted to $62.8 million. The first four mandates referred to in that annex were not covered by the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/25).

13. The Advisory Committee recommended that review of the report of the Secretary-General should be deferred until February 2002, since a number of aspects required further analysis. The Committee did not intend to restrict the ability of the Secretary-General to react in a timely manner with regard to the missions referred to in its report and therefore recommended approval of a charge of $8 million against the provision for special political missions for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2002. The Advisory Committee would undertake a detailed study in February 2002 and report to the Fifth Committee during the first part of the resumed session of the General Assembly.

14. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) asked when the programme budget implications of the missions authorized by the General Assembly would be presented to the Assembly.

15. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that draft resolutions had been introduced in the General Assembly on the Central American peace process and the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala and the corresponding statements of programme budget implications would be presented to the Advisory Committee early the following week. In addition, a draft resolution on the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan would be introduced very shortly and action on all three missions could therefore be expected in the near future.

16. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked why a representative of the Secretary-General had failed to introduce the Secretary-General's report. As a result, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had effectively introduced both the Advisory Committee's report and that of the Secretary-General. His delegation found that situation unacceptable, particularly since it was not the first time it had occurred.

17. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, in general, he had no difficulty with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that, pending a detailed review of the matter by that Committee in February 2002, a charge of $8 million be approved for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2002 against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. He had some reservations, however, about the recommendation contained in paragraph 5 of the Advisory Committee's report that, pending consideration of the report of the Secretary-General, no action should be taken to fill the additional 41 positions, nor should any reclassifications be implemented. Nineteen of those posts were related to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and he would welcome the assurance that the activities planned for the new missions would not be constrained.

18. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the order in which the report of the Secretary-General and that of the Advisory Committee were introduced did not matter. There were no rules in that respect. His introduction of the report of the Advisory Committee might contain comments on the report of the Secretary-General, but it was for the representative of the Secretary-General to decide whether or not to make additional comments.

19. With regard to the Advisory Committee's recommendations, paragraph 5 of the Committee's report must be read in conjunction with paragraph 4, in which the Committee stated that it was not its intention to restrict the ability of the Secretary-General to react in a timely manner with regard to the missions referred to in his report. Whenever the Advisory Committee recommended that action be deferred on special missions or peacekeeping operations, it was always without prejudice to the flexibility accorded to the Secretary-General with respect to recruitment and the filling of posts, provided that the actions of the Secretary-General provided for sufficient flexibility to react to the subsequent decisions of the General Assembly with respect to the number of posts and grading patterns.

20. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, indeed, it did not matter which of the two reports was introduced first, provided that both were presented. However, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provided that the Advisory Committee should comment on the report of the Secretary-General and he was concerned at the impression that was sometimes given that the representative of the Secretary-General was commenting on the Advisory Committee's observations.

21. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) asked whether the Advisory Committee would also recommend that consideration of the proposals with respect to appropriations for the Central American peace process, the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala and the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan: Afghanistan office be deferred to the resumed session of the General Assembly.

22. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee would not recommend deferral of those items, since it had already completed its reports in respect of the missions in question.

23. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he hoped the Committee would follow the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and take action on the draft decision only when it was available to members in writing and in all six official languages.

24. **The Chairman** said that the Committee secretariat would be requested to prepare a draft decision on the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council was seized for action by the Committee the following week.

Revised estimates: effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/56/7/Add 4 and A/56/659)

25. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates: effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/56/659), said that adjustments in the budget estimates were routinely made at that time of the year to bring them into line with changes in exchange rates, inflation and other factors. The estimated additional requirement was approximately $35.3 million, of which $26,337,000 was attributable to revised inflation rate assumptions, $8,420,600 to revised exchange rate assumptions and $513,300 to the adjustment of salary standards. In the course of the year, the dollar had weakened against a

number of major currencies and additional resources would be needed at several duty stations, including Geneva, The Hague and Vienna. That increase had been partially offset, however, by reduced requirements at other duty stations, including Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Santiago, where the dollar had appreciated against local currencies. Schedules I, II and III set out the additional requirements resulting from revised assumptions for exchange rates, inflation, post adjustment multipliers and annual cost-of-living adjustments, while schedule IV showed the effect of recosting by budget section and main determining factor.

26. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/7/Add.4), said that the Committee had found no technical basis for objecting to the Secretary-General's revised estimates arising from the recosting of the effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation and accordingly transmitted them to the Fifth Committee for consideration in the context of that Committee's consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. It might be best for the Fifth Committee to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the understanding that the overall level of the proposed programme budget would be determined by the Committee, taking into account the estimated additional requirement of $35,270,900.

27. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) sought an explanation for the higher salary costs that were projected for New York, where 50 to 60 per cent of the Organization's budget was spent, even though inflation was projected to decline during the biennium 2002-2003 at that duty station.

28. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) said that he shared the concern of the representative of Canada. It was unclear to his delegation why the estimates of salary standards in New York and Geneva should have been revised upwards when inflation rates at those duty stations were projected to decline.

29. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he wished to place on record that the resource requirements for the recosting should be appropriated in accordance with the procedures set out in General Assembly resolution 41/213.

30. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the question raised by the representatives of Canada and Japan, said that the increases resulting from inflation comprised three elements, namely, post adjustment increases for Professional staff, salary adjustments for General Service staff and adjustments to non-post estimates. With regard to Professional staff costs, post adjustment multipliers by main duty stations were determined not only by movements in the consumer price index but also by out-of-area expenditure components. General Service salary increases were determined by the results of surveys and cost-of-living adjustment mechanisms mostly paralleled the movement of the consumer price index. He agreed that New York and Geneva accounted for a large share of the Organization's budget. In New York, however, the post adjustment multiplier had risen above the levels that had been anticipated in the initial proposals.

31. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said that he would welcome a further breakdown of the figure of $26,337,000 that had been recosted for inflation, since it was still unclear to him why inflation should be running at different rates for the same period and the same duty station.

32. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the mechanism for determining the post adjustment multiplier was quite a complicated one, which did not move in lockstep with the consumer price index. In fact, the weights of the various components of the consumer price index did not mirror those of the components measured in the post adjustment index. That was the reason for the difference between the movement of the post adjustment index and that of the consumer price index. Salary costs were calculated on the basis of the post adjustment multiplier determined by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) because the Organization was required to pay salaries at the rate mandated by ICSC.

33. **The Chairman** proposed that the secretariat should prepare a draft decision for action by the Committee, by which it would recommend that the General Assembly take note of the revised estimates arising from the recosting of the effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation.

34. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 38th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 18 December 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
later: Mr. Orr (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Canada)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.42/Rev.1: United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.45: The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (*continued*)

Revised estimates: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (*continued*)

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

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01-70146 (E)

Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.71: World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/56/710; A/C.5/56/28)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/28) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.71, entitled "World Summit on Sustainable Development". Paragraph 8 of the draft resolution contained a request to the Secretary-General to launch a public information campaign to raise global awareness of the Summit. The total requirements for such a campaign were estimated at $352,500. In reviewing the potential for absorption of those costs, the Secretariat had been unable to identify any lower-priority elements from which resources could be shifted at the current time, and no extrabudgetary resources were available for the public information campaign. The total requirements sought would therefore be in addition to the initial estimates under section 26 (Public information) of the proposed programme budget for 2002-2003 and would be charged against the contingency fund. No provision had been made for that activity in the initial estimates for 2002-2003 because the Secretariat had had no specific mandate to conduct a public information campaign on the Summit.

2. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/710) on the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/28). The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.71, expenditures would arise not exceeding $352,500 under section 26 (Public information) of the proposed programme budget for 2002-2003, and that additional appropriations would be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedures set out in General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

3. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, since the Secretary-General had indicated that there was no potential for absorption of the costs of the public information campaign for the Summit under section 26 of the original budget proposal, he supported the Secretary-General's proposal and the Advisory Committee's recommendation thereon.

4. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his Government attached great importance to the Summit. He was disappointed that the original budget proposal for 2002-2003 had made no provision for the public information campaign, since the Summit had been in the planning stage for a long time. He was concerned to note that the Department of Public Information appeared to have been unaware of the event.

5. The requirements outlined in the annex to the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/28) included a provision for four-colour posters in the six official languages. He asked what the cost would be if the posters were printed in black and white, and how effective black-and-white posters would be from a public information standpoint. He also wished to know how the special United Nations radio programmes referred to in the annex were related to the international radio broadcasting project (A/56/21/Add.1, draft resolution B) and whether there were opportunities for synergy between those activities. The indication that $30,000 would be used to "send money for United Nations information centres worldwide" was unclear. Lastly, he asked for details on the regional projects to be carried out to publicize the Summit.

6. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) recalled that the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had been established after the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, had met every year for 10 years and had spent at least two years preparing for the 2002 follow-up Summit. He therefore found it strange that the Department of Public Information had chosen to ignore the Summit in its work plan for the following biennium, and wondered whether that omission illustrated the Department's view of the Summit's importance. Since the Department and the Programme Planning and Budget Division had failed to plan in advance for the public information campaign, the request for additional resources was unjustified. Instead of approving the resources requested, the

General Assembly should ask the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to investigate why those resources had not been included in the original budget proposal. The Summit was very important to all countries and regions, and public information on the event and the issues it was to address was just as important as the Summit itself, but the Department of Public Information should use existing resources to carry out those activities.

7. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) pointed out that, although draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.71 contained a request to the Secretary-General to launch the public information campaign, the Department of Public Information had already issued a brochure on the Summit. He asked what the legal basis had been for the brochure's issuance and whether the Department could issue such materials before the General Assembly had requested the launching of the public information campaign. Since the Department had issued the brochure in the current year, he asked why no provision for the public information campaign had been made in the budget proposal for the coming biennium.

8. **Mr. Albrecht** (South Africa) said that he supported the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The issues raised by the United States, Israeli and Japanese delegations were important and should be addressed in informal consultations. Since it did not appear that the public information campaign could be funded from within existing resources, he hoped that resources from the contingency fund would be made available for that purpose. With respect to the idea that posters should be printed in black and white instead of in colour, Governments should consider what they would do, in producing public information materials for their own purposes, before making such suggestions.

9. **Ms. Wahab** (Indonesia) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The public information campaign was very important to the success of the Summit and should be adequately funded. It was her understanding that the Department of Public Information had been unable to request resources for that purpose in the original budget submission because it had received no specific mandate from the General Assembly. Her delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's resource request and the Advisory Committee's recommendation thereon.

10. **Mr. Fox** (Australia) said that Australia attached great importance to the Summit and was therefore concerned that no provision had been made in the proposed programme budget for a public information campaign to promote awareness of the event. He noted the comment by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division that it would not be possible at the current stage of the budget cycle to reprioritize the activities of the Department of Public Information. The Fifth Committee should therefore assist the Department in reprioritizing its activities in the context of its consideration of section 26 (Public information) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. His delegation would be happy to participate in that exercise. He noted, lastly, that no extrabudgetary resources had been pledged for the public information campaign and wondered whether any action had been taken to invite such resources.

11. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to questions raised, said that, consistent with past practice, the resources that had been proposed for public information activities did not include any provision for activities associated with the special meetings and conferences scheduled for the biennium because there had been no specific mandate for a public relations component in those resources. He could not say more on the topic without being repetitive. The elements of the promotional campaign listed in the annex to the statement submitted by the Secretary-General were appropriate for modern public information campaigns. The radio products included in the requirements for the promotional campaign were special programmes that contained material additional to that normally produced for the area. The requirement to "send money" listed under item 4 of the annex was in fact a typographical error. It should read instead "seed money". The costs related to the other elements listed in the annex were standard.

12. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee consider in informal consultations the decision to be taken on the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.71.

13. *It was so decided.*

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/56/716; A/C.5/56/29)

14. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/29) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, entitled "Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries". By that draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to establish the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and would decide that the provisions of the resolution should be implemented within the approved level of the budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The post of High Representative would be established at the Under-Secretary-General level under a new budget section 9A. A total of 13 posts were being requested for the new Office, of which 10 would be redeployed from section 11A (Trade and development) and three from section 10 (Africa: New Agenda for Development). Table 2 of the Secretary-General's statement indicated the requirements of the Office by object of expenditure and the amounts of the proposed transfers from sections 10 and 11A, which would bring the net total requirements for the new Office to $1,220,700. That amount would be charged against the contingency fund.

15. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/716) on the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/29). In paragraph 9 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended the establishment of the Office of the High Representative, but also recommended that the Fifth Committee should defer a decision on the permanent establishment of up to 12 other posts proposed for the Office until the Secretary-General had submitted a report on the matter based on the elements outlined in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Advisory Committee's report. Subject to those recommendations, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, net additional appropriations up to $1,220,700, as specified in paragraph 27 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General, would be required at the current stage, subject to the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 on the use and operation of the contingency fund.

16. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that the United States supported the work being done by the United Nations to assist the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. It was important, however, to examine ways in which that work could be carried out more effectively and, in that regard, clarification of the Advisory Committee's recommendations would be helpful. He noted, for example, the high cost of rental of premises and alterations for the proposed Office of the High Representative and would welcome a further breakdown of the proposed expenditures. His delegation was of the view that the Secretary-General's entire proposal should be implemented through redeployment and reprioritization.

17. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group of 77 and China strongly supported the establishment of the Office of the High Representative and the proposals made by the Secretary-General for making the Office operational. He noted the Secretary-General's proposal to redeploy resources from sections 10 (Africa: New Agenda for Development) and 11A (Trade and development) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 and cautioned that consideration should be given to the impact which redeployment would have on the work programmes under the budget sections in question. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was carrying out the technical work for the developing countries in question and he hoped that the Conference had been consulted before the proposal was made and that an opportunity would be provided to hear the views of UNCTAD representatives on the matter.

18. **Mr. Hamidullah** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the establishment of the Office of the High Representative was consistent with the wishes of the General Assembly for more visible follow-up for the three groups of developing countries. With regard to resource requirements, since some 96 States Members of the Organization would benefit from the establishment of the proposed Office, it might have been expected that the Office would be fully funded from regular budget resources. It was in no one's

interest to have an Office with an anaemic structure. He noted, moreover, that responsibility for coordination was being transferred to the Office from UNCTAD, which would retain responsibility for substantive issues and for capacity-building in the developing countries concerned.

19. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) noted the limited progress that had been achieved by the least developed countries during the previous two United Nations Development Decades. In his view, the success of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 would depend on the effectiveness of the mechanism that had been established to follow up and review the decisions of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. He hoped that the urgency of developing countries' needs would be reflected in the budget proposals so that yet another Decade would not be lost to that group of countries.

20. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union fully agreed on the need for effective follow-up to the outcome of the Third United Nations Conference and would give careful but sympathetic consideration to the Secretary-General's proposals. He hoped that all parties concerned would cooperate in ensuring the establishment and successful operation of the Office of the High Representative to implement the decisions that had been taken at the Brussels Conference. The functioning of the Office of the High Representative and its capacity to act as early as possible would depend on the mobilization of resources through redeployment and he would welcome clarification of the impact of the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the effective functioning of the Office.

21. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to questions that had been raised, said that the course of action which the Advisory Committee had recommended in paragraphs 9 and 10 of its report (A/56/716) was the most appropriate one. The Advisory Committee had recommended the establishment of the Office of the High Representative and of a post at the Under-Secretary-General level to carry out the functions indicated in paragraph 5 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/29). It had further recommended that the Fifth Committee defer a decision on the permanent establishment of up to 12 other posts for the Office until submission of a report by the Secretary-General on the programmatic implications and impact on the activities of the affected sections of the programme budget, namely 10 and 11A. The latter recommendation, however, in no way impaired the capacity of the Secretary-General and the High Representative to make the proposed Office operational.

22. On the subject of the redeployment of posts, the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Fifth Committee should take note of the proposal did not mean that the redeployment exercise should not continue. The statement submitted by the Secretary-General, however, was not clear as to the programmatic implications and impact on the activities of the affected sections of the programme budget and written clarification was therefore needed of what sections 10 and 11A would look like after the posts had been redeployed. The report of the Secretary-General should also contain a carefully articulated indication of resources required, including total availability of posts, either seconded from other agencies in the system or to be funded from available voluntary contributions. In addition, the report should address how the operational capacity of the organizations and bodies of the system, in particular UNCTAD, would be enhanced in their activities in support of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and how system-wide coordination was to be achieved.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.42/Rev.1: United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (A/56/705; A/C.5/56/26)

23. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/26) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala". By adopting the draft resolution, the General Assembly would authorize the continuation of an ongoing mission at roughly the same level as in the biennium 2000-2001, adjusted by a reduction of six posts. The resulting requirements would amount to $14,755,100, which would be charged against the provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs).

24. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/705) on the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/26). The budget proposals for the Mission for the biennium 2000-2001 had been based on the plan for gradually scaling down the Mission's presence in Guatemala until operations concluded in 2003. However, as indicated in the preamble to draft resolution A/56/L.42/Rev.1, a new schedule had been approved for implementation of the substantive aspects of the peace agreements from 2000 to the end of 2004. The Secretary-General was requesting $14,755,100 for the Mission for 2002. The General Assembly had appropriated $43.2 million for the biennium 2000-2001 and the unaudited statements of the Mission's financial operations indicated that $39.9 million of that amount had been spent, leaving an unencumbered balance of some $3.4 million. The Advisory Committee recommended that the additional requirements of $14,755,100 should be charged against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs).

25. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) noted that, for the period ending 31 December 2001, the activities of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) had resulted in an unencumbered balance of $3,361,800. The question therefore arose of how much of the total amount that had been allocated for special political missions remained unencumbered at the current stage of the biennium.

26. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, to the best of his recollection, a significant amount of $10 million to $12 million remained unencumbered. The expenditures for special political missions had been reported in the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. He would check the exact figures and communicate it to the Committee at a later stage. The budget for MINUGUA represented a small portion of that amount.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.45: The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development (A/56/709; A/C.5/56/27)

27. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/27) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.45, entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". Under the draft resolution, the General Assembly would continue to strengthen the coordination of United Nations activities in that area by approving the continued financing of one Professional (P-4) post and one General Service post in the Department of Political Affairs. The requirements of $188,500 would be charged against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs).

28. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/709) on the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/56/27). By draft resolution A/56/L.45, the General Assembly would authorize the continuation of provisions which it had previously approved for the activities referred to in the draft resolution. The Advisory Committee recommended that an amount of $188,500 should be charged against the provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs).

29. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America), noting that a provision of $188,500 was requested for one Political Affairs Officer post (P-4) and one General Service post to continue to provide support to the efforts of the Secretary-General in post-conflict peace-building in El Salvador and Guatemala, asked where the staff concerned were based and what proportion of their time was devoted to the respective countries. Referring to paragraph 12 of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/56/27), he asked how many meetings of the United Nations inter-agency task force for the reconstruction and transformation of Central America the Political Affairs Officer had attended during the biennium 2000-2001. The activities carried out by the two staff were very

similar to those of MINUGUA and it was therefore important to avoid the duplication of effort. While the amount requested was small, that did not relieve the Committee of its responsibility to ensure that resources were used as efficiently as possible.

30. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Professional and General Service posts had existed for a number of years to provide back-up and oversight at Headquarters to the activities of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in Central America. The staff concerned devoted 80 per cent of their time to providing support to MINUGUA and 20 per cent to supporting peace-building activities in El Salvador. There was no risk of overlap with MINUGUA, since, although the substantive areas were the same, the Mission's activities were field-based, whereas the two DPA staff provided back-up from Headquarters. He had no information on the number of meetings of the United Nations inter-agency task force that had been attended by the Political Affairs Officer during the biennium 2000-2001.

31. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would continue its consideration of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.45 in informal consultations.

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (continued)
(A/C.5/56/L.21)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.21

32. **The Chairman** recalled that, based on his proposal, the Committee, at its 37th meeting, had requested the secretariat to prepare a draft decision on the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council was seized.

33. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) drew attention to an error in the preambular paragraph of the Spanish version of the text.

34. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had taken note of the necessary correction.

35. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.21, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

Revised estimates: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (continued)
(A/C.5/56/L.22)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.22

36. **The Chairman** recalled that, based on his proposal, the Committee, at its 37th meeting, had requested the secretariat to prepare a draft decision on the revised estimates of the effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation.

37. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed regret that faulty sound equipment in the conference room had made it difficult for him to state his delegation's position on the draft decision. The Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services should look into the problem and ensure that there was no recurrence. Regarding the draft decision, he noted with satisfaction that the text had been issued in the six official languages of the United Nations and expressed the hope that that practice would continue. While his delegation did not object to the substance of the draft decision, it was concerned about the use of the phrase "takes note of". He recalled that the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, had indicated, in a letter dated 4 April 2001 to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/55/42, annex II), that "taking note of" a report or course of action did not express either approval or disapproval. Thus, if the intention of the Committee was for the General Assembly to approve the revised estimates referred to in the draft decision, the phrase "takes note of", which was neutral, should be replaced by one that indicated approval.

38. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that, at the current stage of the Committee's review of the proposed programme budget, it was the Secretariat's practice to produce revised estimates of the effect of changes in the rates of exchange and inflation. Those estimates were then taken into account in the draft resolution on the appropriation for the proposed programme budget and approved at that stage.

39. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the meaning of the phrase "takes note of" depended on the context in which it was used. The Fifth Committee had yet to take a final decision on the resource level of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. It could not therefore recommend the approval of the revised estimates of the

effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation and the related amount of $35.3 million; the revised rates would be considered in the context of the Committee's review of the overall level of the appropriation for the biennium 2002-2003, which would take place shortly. He noted that the same approach had been taken with respect to the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001. Such an approach was entirely appropriate when the Committee was dealing with revised estimates and was consistent with its past practice.

40. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.22 was adopted.*

41. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had no objection to the course of action proposed. However, he wished to underscore that the meaning of the phrase "takes note of" was not dependent on the context.

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/56/674 and A/56/694)

42. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/56/674), said that the report provided an estimate of the anticipated final level of expenditures and income for the biennium. The estimate was based on actual expenditures for the first 20 months of the biennium, projected requirements for the previous four months, changes in inflation and exchange rates and cost-of-living adjustments as compared with the assumptions made in the first performance report (A/55/645 and Corr.1), which had formed the basis for the revised appropriation and estimate of income for the biennium 2000-2001 approved by the General Assembly. The estimates proposed represented an increase of $28.9 million, as set out in table 1. Table 2 showed the components of the additional requirement, while table 3 contained a summary of changes under expenditure sections. As in the past, the report contained nine schedules providing additional information on the assumptions on which the anticipated final level of expenditures and income was based.

43. As indicated in table 2, changes in exchange rates accounted for $10.4 million of the net additional requirement, changes in inflation for $9.1 million and commitments entered into under the provisions of resolution 54/252 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses and in respect of the revised estimates and the programme budget implications of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council for $14.5 million. Those increases were offset by reductions resulting from variations in post costs and adjustments to other objects of expenditure, based on actual anticipated requirements, and by a decrease in income.

44. Details of the changes in rates of exchange and inflation were provided in paragraphs 5 to 12 and in schedules 4 and 5, while table 4 showed exchange rate and inflation changes by duty station. The commitments entered into to meet unforeseen and extraordinary expenses were described in paragraphs 12 to 15. Paragraphs 16 to 38 and schedules 1, 2, 3 and 8 contained information on post incumbency and other changes that had led to a decrease of $6.2 million. A vacancy rate of 8.3 per cent for the Professional category and above and 2.6 per cent for General Service staff had been applied for 2000, as approved by the General Assembly. For the second year of the biennium, a vacancy rate of 6.5 per cent for Professionals and 2.5 per cent for General Service staff had been assumed. However, on the basis of experience thus far, it appeared that the level of vacancies realized in 2001 would amount to 6.9 per cent for the Professional category and above and 3.2 per cent for the General Service category. Thus, there was a downward trend overall with respect to vacancy rates.

45. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/694), said that, as indicated in the second performance report, the projected expenditure for the biennium 2000-2001 was estimated at $2,560.9 million gross, which reflected an increase of $27.8 million. The Advisory Committee had found no technical reason to disagree with those estimates. He wished to draw attention, however, to paragraph 10 of its report, in which the Advisory Committee indicated that the amount of unliquidated obligations at the end of September 2001 had stood at $161.7 million. In his experience, not all of that amount would ultimately have to be assessed on Member States. In

accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the closing of the accounts would take place on 31 March 2002. Only when the Secretary-General had submitted to the Advisory Committee a final statement of accounts would the Advisory Committee be able to determine whether the $161.7 million would represent an additional assessment on Member States.

46. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that vacancy rates were excessively high in some budget sections and that, as a result of delays in recruitment and deployment and other management issues, the vacancy rate for Professionals in 2000 had exceeded the rate that had been approved by the General Assembly. The one-time provision to the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for 2001, which had not been utilized, should be disbursed to the Institute in 2002.

47. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation wished to align itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It too was concerned about high vacancy rates and believed that the unutilized provision to INSTRAW for 2001 should be disbursed to the Institute in 2002.

48. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) asked what was the amount of the provision. He noted that the anticipated final level of expenditure represented an increase of $27.8 million and wondered whether any portion of that amount would be charged to the contingency fund and, if so, how that would be done, since only $224,300 remained in the fund for 2000-2001. Changes in the rates of exchange and inflation accounted for $19.5 million of the increase under expenditure sections. Recalling that the General Assembly, in annex I to resolution 41/213, had called for a comprehensive solution to the problem of all additional expenditures, including those deriving from inflation and currency fluctuations, he requested an updated study on the matter.

49. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) drew attention to the figures for post incumbency and other changes under section 27 (Management and central support services), which showed an over-expenditure of nearly $4 million. Given the high vacancy rates for the Professional category under that section, which were shown in schedule 8 to be 10.6 per cent in 2000 and 9.6 per cent in 2001, he failed to understand the reason for such over-expenditure. With regard to section 2 (General Assembly affairs and conference services), even though the vacancy rate for the Professional category was lower than the rate budgeted for, it remained difficult to comprehend a level of over-expenditure that exceeded $24 million. He would also appreciate an explanation for the increased projected expenditure arising from other staff costs under the same section. While he welcomed the reduced requirements of $12.9 million under general operating expenses, attributed in paragraph 29 to costs related to premises, he asked whether such over-budgeting was common and whether the same variation had occurred in previous years.

50. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that the increase of $28.9 million in budgetary requirements reflected overspending in various areas, which suggested that the Secretariat was experiencing some difficulties in managing its allocations. He asked for details of the procedure followed by programme managers when reporting over-expenditure to senior management. He drew attention to the total of unliquidated obligations, which stood at almost $162 million, and requested the corresponding figures for the previous biennia to determine whether such an amount was normal for the current stage in the cycle.

51. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation was concerned at the report's lack of clarity. For example, it provided no details about the ways in which savings had been achieved or could be achieved in future. She agreed with the Advisory Committee's findings that performance reports should relate financial data to programme performance. Subsequent reports should therefore include more information of a qualitative nature on programme performance and indicate ways in which difficulties could be resolved.

52. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that it was not exceptional for unliquidated obligations to stand at $165 million at the end of September, and that the total had already fallen to $95 million since that date. It could yet drop even further before the closing of accounts at the end of March 2002. It was not uncommon to have unliquidated obligations of between $100 and $120 million at the closing of accounts.

53. On the question of whether or not some of the additional requirements reflected in the performance report would fall under the contingency fund, areas

such as increased rates of exchange and inflation and costs derived from special political missions were not covered by the contingency fund. As for the proposals to disburse funds to INSTRAW, there had been insufficient extrabudgetary resources to meet the conditions set by the General Assembly, and action had therefore not been taken. The Committee would need to request a change in the conditions attached to the appropriation of $800,000, should it decide to release that amount.

54. The high vacancy rates under section 27 (Management and central support services) applied only to Professional posts. As indicated in schedule 8, vacancy rates were below the budgeted rate in the case of General Service staff. Since there were more General Service than Professional posts, the salary account was affected more seriously by the tight budget for General Service posts, which had led to over-expenditure. Other factors that contributed to the increased requirement under section 27 included higher than indicated common staff costs and above-average amounts of within-grade step increments. Although actual requirements generally varied from predictions, variances did not constitute a problem, provided that the overall balance remained around a mean, which was the case of the current balance. He acknowledged the overspending in the Division of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. The additional spending, however, had been proportional to the 9.6 per cent increase in the number of meetings relative to the base used for estimates. Furthermore, the proportion of meetings for which interpretation had been required had been 14 per cent higher than expected. In view of the need for staff movements and short-term contracts to meet conference requirements, salaries and other staff costs were above average in the Division of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. The overspending had been foreseen and reported during the 2001 budget review and the expectation had been that it would have been offset by the high vacancy rates in other budget sections. General operating expenditure on maintenance, utilities and so on was a large component of the Division's appropriation and there had been little variance overall, since net spending had been $133 million out of the original provision of $135 million. He expressed his readiness to respond to further questions during informal consultations.

55. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee consider in informal consultations the decision to be taken on the question.

56. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Revised estimates resulting from the strengthening of the role of internal oversight services at the International Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/C.5/56/30)

57. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the revised estimates contained in document A/C.5/56/30, said that the estimates had been revised in response to the view that had been expressed by a number of delegations that enhanced internal oversight was required for the two Tribunals. Six temporary posts were proposed to provide audit and investigations services to the Tribunals, four at the P-4 and two at the P-3 level. Should the General Assembly adopt the revised estimates, additional appropriations of $167,550 and $219,850 would be required under the budget for the biennium 2002-2003 for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, respectively. The issue would be reviewed during the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the Assembly.

58. *Mr. Orr (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the chair.*

59. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally presenting the report of the Advisory Committee on the revised estimates resulting from the strengthening of the role of internal oversight

services at the International Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003,* said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the additional appropriations proposed by the Secretary-General. However, the issue of providing resources on a continuing basis beyond the first six months of 2002 should be submitted in the context of the first financial and programme performance report for the Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003.

60. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, although the report of the Advisory Committee was yet to be issued, it had been printed and distributed to delegations. He welcomed the improvement on the previous procedure and hoped it would continue. Nevertheless, he failed to understand why the estimates had not been submitted along with the proposed budget for the International Tribunals.

61. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that OIOS had submitted the requirements at a very late stage, which had prevented their inclusion in the programme budget proposals.

62. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee consider and make appropriate recommendations on the action to be taken on the question in the context of the informal consultations on both items.

63. *It was decided.*

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

* Subsequently circulated as document A/56/717.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.39

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Summary record of the 39th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 December 2001, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 121: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Albania (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.27)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.27

1. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.27 was adopted.*

Agenda item 125: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.23

2. **Mr. Chandra** (India), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.23, said that the understanding in paragraph 6 of the draft text was that the report of the Secretary-General would be submitted during the main part of the General Assembly's fifty-seventh session for subsequent consideration by the Committee at the resumed fifty-seventh session.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.23 was adopted.*

4. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking in explanation of position, said that the substance of the draft resolution remained of concern to her delegation. The question of Member States in arrears in their payments must be looked at in its broader context. It was unacceptable to establish a link between the granting of exemptions under Article 19 of the Charter and measures of the type addressed in the draft text. Each case should be examined on its own merits.

Agenda item 127: United Nations common system (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.15)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.15

5. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.15 was adopted.*

6. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union welcomed the consensus that had been reached on the issue and was glad that important elements of the Secretary-General's proposals were now moving forward.

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.25)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.26)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.25

7. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway), coordinator of the informal consultations on the item, introduced and orally revised draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.25. In paragraph 7, the word "firm" should be inserted before "exit strategy".

8. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that the word "firm" should be inserted before the words "exit strategy" in both paragraphs 7 and 8 of the draft text in order to be faithful to the formulation that had been used by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

9. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the words used in paragraph 21 of the Advisory Committee's report on the financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (A/56/666) were "a firm, realistically achievable exit strategy". If a political decision were made to exclude the words "realistically achievable", then the Fifth Committee should go along with the coordinator's suggestion. If, however, the wish was to bring the wording of the draft resolution into line with the words used by the Advisory Committee, then the words "realistically achievable" should also be included.

10. **Mr. Iossifov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had no objections to the use of the phrase "a firm exit strategy".

11. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) said that use of the term "realistically achievable" had never been discussed, but that it was for the Committee to decide.

12. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Committee should go along with the suggestion made by the coordinator and retain the wording "a firm exit strategy", especially since in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution the Assembly would, in any event, endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee.

13. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.25, as orally revised and amended, was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.26

14. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) introduced and orally revised draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.26.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.26, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.62: Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan and the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (A/56/720; A/C.5/56/31)

16. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.62, contained in document A/C.5/56/31. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.62, the requirements of $7,355,400 would be charged against the provision of $93,691,600 for special political missions requested in section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

17. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/720), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.62, an amount of $7,355,400 would be charged against the provision of $93.7 million for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

18. **The Chairman** proposed that, without prejudice to the rules of procedure under which documents containing decisions were required to be issued 24 hours in advance of the adoption of the decision, and based on the recommendation contained in paragraph 7 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/720), the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/56/L.62, an amount of $7,355,400 would be charged against the provision of $93.7 million for special missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

19. *It was so decided.*

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (A/56/7/Add.6; A/C.5/56/25/Add.1)

20. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council was seized (A/C.5/56/25/Add.1), said that the total estimated requirements for the United Nations Office in Burundi, the mandate for which extended into the biennium 2002-2003, amounted to $6,925,800, which would be charged against the $93.7 million provision proposed for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In a letter dated 7 December 2001 (S/2001/1207), the President of the Security Council had informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Security Council supported his recommendations to strengthen the Office in order to assist in the implementation of the peace accord in Arusha.

21. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/7/Add.6), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that consideration of the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council was seized be deferred pending a detailed review to be conducted by the Advisory Committee in February 2002. In the meantime, it recommended that an amount of $1,700,000 for the period 1 January to 31 March 2002 should be charged

against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

22. **The Chairman** proposed that, without prejudice to the rules of procedure under which documents containing decisions were required to be issued 24 hours in advance of the adoption of the decision, the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/56/25/Add.1 on the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized, and concurs with the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraph 11 of its report;

Approves the charge of $1.7 million for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2002 for the United Nations Office in Burundi (A/C.5/56/25/Add.1) against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003;

Decides to resume its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized at its first resumed session in March 2002."

23. *It was so decided.*

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (A/56/7/Add.7; A/C.5/56/25/Add.2)

24. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council was seized (A/C.5/56/25/Add.2), said that the total estimated requirements for the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Cyprus for a one-year period from 1 January to 31 December 2002 amounted to $1,413,400, which would be charged against the $93,691,600 provision proposed for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In a letter dated 5 December 2001 to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/1182), the Secretary-General had drawn the Council's attention to the fact that efforts relating to the mission of his good offices in Cyprus would continue at least throughout 2002.

25. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/7/Add.7), said that the Advisory Committee recommended a different course of action with respect to the request under consideration. While the Committee would take into account the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/25/Add.2) when it resumed consideration of the estimates contained in documents A/C.5/56/25 and Add.1 in February 2002, it recommended that an amount of $1,413,400 be charged against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 for the Special Adviser on Cyprus for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2002.

26. **The Chairman** proposed that, without prejudice to the rules of procedure under which documents containing decisions were required to be issued 24 hours in advance of the adoption of the decision, the Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/56/25/Add.2 on the estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized, and concurs with the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraph 7 of its report;

Approves the charge of $1,413,400 for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2002 for the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Cyprus (A/C.5/56/25/Add.2) against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003."

27. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.40

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
7 March 2002

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 40th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 24 December 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 (continued)

Request for subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute contained in the report of the Board (continued)

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (continued)

Inter-organizational security measures: implementation of section II of General Assembly resolution 55/238 of 23 December 2000 entitled "Safety and security of United Nations personnel" (continued)

Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates

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01-71043 (E)

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Action taken on certain items

Closure of the work of the Fifth Committee during the main part of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 124: Pattern of conferences (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.24

1. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.24. A number of minor changes had been made to the text. The reference to "A to E" in the first and last preambular paragraphs had been deleted and, in section I, paragraph 7, "relevant the provisions" should read instead "the relevant provisions".

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.24, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 130: Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.36

3. **Mr. Ahmed** (Iraq) said that his delegation was extremely concerned about the breaches referred to in document A/55/436. It was of vital importance to follow the matter up in order to ensure that financial and accounting operations were carried out in accordance with the relevant United Nations directives and resolutions. Moreover, those breaches constituted a squandering of Iraqi funds earmarked for humanitarian purposes under the memorandum of understanding with a view to alleviating the burden of the embargo on the Iraqi people. His delegation was therefore anxious that they should be referred to the Security Council for consideration and the adoption of appropriate measures to ensure the sound operation of the Office of the Iraq Programme and safeguard Iraqi assets.

4. Accordingly, his delegation was most concerned that consensus should prevail in the conduct of the Committee's work, expressed appreciation to the coordinator, who had produced a compromise solution, and endorsed the coordinator's proposal concerning the paragraphs referred to in the consensus draft resolution (A/C.5/56/L.36). His Government would, however, address a letter to the Security Council drawing its attention to the contents of document A/55/436.

5. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.36 was adopted.*

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Agenda item 133: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/C.5/56/L.32)

6. **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria) reiterated his delegation's commitment to effective implementation of the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, and to strengthening the capacities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

7. His delegation attached particular importance to preserving the Committee's prerogatives in the administrative and budgetary fields and to ensuring strict compliance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and it viewed with alarm the recent attempts to deprive the Fifth Committee of certain prerogatives in favour of another Committee. His delegation would closely follow the issue in the context of discussions relating to the support account, at the resumed session of the General Assembly in May 2002 and in future reports on rapid deployment and strengthening of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.32 was adopted.*

9. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, said that the Committee had adopted, virtually at the last minute, financial provisions for strengthening the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In a spirit of consensus, the Committee had followed all but one of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The European Union had expressed clear reservations on some of the conclusions of the Advisory Committee relating to the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit. Those views were shared by many developing and developed States, particularly the major troop contributors and States benefiting from peacekeeping operations. The problems had not been resolved and the Secretariat should present new proposals at the Assembly's resumed fifty-sixth session. The issue of public information at Headquarters

in relation to field operations, which had scarcely been mentioned during the Committee's discussions, should also be reviewed. The resumed fifty-sixth session would also provide an opportunity for the Committee to provide financing for an essential aspect of the Brahimi report, namely, the development of a rapid deployment capacity and of the strategic reserve at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi.

10. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations was not in a position to carry out its restructuring and recruitment of staff to enable it to provide adequate support to field operations. That quantitative improvement would be accompanied by changes in internal management and by strengthened coordination with other departments, offices, funds and programmes.

11. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution because of the need to strengthen the capabilities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. More imaginative thinking was required, however, as well as a balanced approach that took account of all the priorities of the United Nations.

Support account for peacekeeping operations (A/C.5/56/34)

12. **Mr. Yeo** Bock Cheng (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division) introduced the note by the Secretary-General on the support account for peacekeeping operations contained in document A/C.5/56/34.

13. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee take note of the amounts to be appropriated in respect of the five peacekeeping missions referred to in the note by the Secretary-General.

14. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.30

15. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.30 was adopted.*

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Draft decisions contained in document A/C.5/56/L.33

16. *The draft decisions contained in document A/C.5/56/L.33 were adopted.*

17. **Ms. Samayoa-Recari** (Guatemala) expressed gratitude for the support that had been given to the peace process in Guatemala.

18. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) regretted the failure of the Department of Public Information to include any provision in its budget proposals for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as a result of which the Committee had had to approve an additional appropriation of $352,500 for the Summit.

19. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) urged the Committee to adopt a more comprehensive approach to the question of financing certain aspects of international conferences. More time should be allocated during consideration of the budget proposals for addressing those issues and for considering the relevant recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 (continued)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.37

20. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.37 was adopted.*

Request for subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute contained in the report of the Board (continued)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.39

21. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.39 was adopted.*

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (continued)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.38

22. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.38 was adopted.*

Inter-organizational security measures: implementation of section II of General Assembly resolution 55/238 of 23 December 2000 entitled "Safety and security of United Nations personnel" (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.31

23. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), coordinator of the informal consultations on the item, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.31 on behalf of the Chairman.

24. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.31 was adopted.*

25. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, in submitting future proposals to the Committee, the Secretariat should take into account the provisions of the relevant resolution of the General Assembly.

26. **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria) welcomed the consensus that had been reached on such an important resolution.

Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/56/33)

27. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates contained in document A/C.5/56/33. The consolidated amount of $16,707,900 was within the available balance of the contingency fund. An uncommitted balance of $2,192,100 would remain in the fund.

28. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) orally presented the Advisory Committee's observations on the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/33). The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should proceed along the lines indicated in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Secretary-General's report.

29. **The Chairman** proposed that, without prejudice to rule 78 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee should recommend that the General Assembly note that a balance of $2,192,100 remained in the contingency fund.

30. *It was so decided.*

31. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that all relevant organs should be notified that an uncommitted balance, to which they could have recourse in the future, remained in the contingency fund.

Utilization of the provision for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs (A/C.5/56/32)

32. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the note by the Secretary-General on utilization of the provision for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, contained in document A/C.5/56/32. The General Assembly was requested to approve a charge of $33,690,300 against the provision for special political missions, leaving an unallocated balance of some $64.5 million.

33. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee, recalled that, in its reports on estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council was seized (A/56/7/Add.5-7), the Advisory Committee had recommended a partial charge, pending the submission of a comprehensive report to the Assembly at its resumed fifty-sixth session. It would therefore be appropriate for the Fifth Committee to recommend that the General Assembly approve a charge of $33,690,300 against the provision for special political missions, as indicated in paragraph 4 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/32).

34. **The Chairman** proposed that, without prejudice to rule 78 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee should recommend that the General Assembly approve a charge of $33,690,300 against the provision for special political missions.

35. *It was so decided.*

Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.29

36. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, drew attention to discrepancies between the French and English versions of paragraph 49 of the draft resolution, where, in the English text, the Assembly would note "with concern the current and projected potential decreasing trend in extrabudgetary resources". The French rendering should be brought into line with the English text.

37. Also, under part VI of the draft text (Human rights and humanitarian affairs), the content of paragraph 125 did not reflect what had been agreed upon in the "informal informal" consultations, which was that the title of subprogramme 1 should be reproduced in full in the paragraph. The European Union would like to see the appropriate correction made. Furthermore, on realigning the narrative section of section 22 (Human rights), the facilitator had distributed a note that reflected the negotiations on the

matter, but which was not reflected in the annex containing changes to the programme narratives of the proposed programme budget.

38. Lastly, paragraph 74 (f) of the French text contained elements ("*sont connus*") that were not present in the English text. While the European Union had no difficulty with the inclusion of the words "*sont connus*", which in fact added greater clarity to the text, the French version should be brought into line with the English text.

39. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) agreed with the representative of Belgium that the content of paragraph 125 should reflect what had been agreed upon in the "informal informal" consultations. In addition, the entire content of section 22 (Human rights) of the annex to the draft resolution should be replaced by the final version of the changes to the narrative, the text of which had earlier been circulated to members of the Committee. Lastly, the blank space in paragraph 152 should be filled.

40. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), supported by **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria), recalled that it had been agreed in the informal consultations to delete the words "as he sees appropriate" in paragraph 103 of the draft text.

41. **Mr. Ekorong A Dong** (Cameroon) said that the reference to West Africa in paragraph 131 should be deleted. In paragraph 150, the English version should be brought into line with the original French text.

42. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana) drew attention to paragraphs 107 and 108, in which the vacancy rate indicated of no more than 5 per cent was at variance with the vacancy rate of 6.5 per cent for Professionals and 3.1 per cent for General Service staff indicated in V (g) of section 16 of the Committee's draft report (A/C.5/56/L.28 (Part I)). The wording "provision of resources therefore" in paragraph 113 was also at variance with the wording used by the Advisory Committee in paragraph V.20 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/7). The Advisory Committee had used the words "provision of resources therefor".

43. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked whether the number of the session of the General Assembly, which had been left blank in paragraph 152, had not been agreed upon in the informal consultations.

44. **Mr. Ivashchenko** (Ukraine) agreed with the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the narrative part of section 22 of the draft resolution should be replaced by the text containing the changes to the narrative agreed upon in the "informal informal" consultations, which had been circulated to members of the Committee.

45. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the comma should be deleted after the word "activities" in paragraph 48 of the English text.

46. **The Chairman** said that all oral corrections would be incorporated into the final version of the draft text.

47. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to the question raised by the representative of Botswana, said that the wording used by the Advisory Committee in paragraph V.20 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/7) was "the provision of resources therefor". The same wording would thus be appropriate for paragraph 113 of the draft text.

48. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the question raised by the delegation of Botswana, said that the vacancy rate of 6.5 per cent for Professionals and 3.1 per cent for General Service indicated under section 16 of the Committee's draft report (A/C.5/56/L.28 (Part I)) reflected an adjustment that applied to the Regional Commissions Liaison Office at Headquarters. No other adjustments had been made for vacancies at the regional commission for Africa.

49. *Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.29, as orally revised, was adopted.*

50. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the Central and Eastern European countries that associated themselves with the statement, said that, in approving the proposed programme budget, the Committee had made available resources for implementing the agreed objectives, mandates and programmes while at the same time cutting some $75 million from the amount proposed by the Secretary-General, thus demonstrating its continued commitment to budgetary discipline and the optimum utilization of resources. The European Union was very pleased with the result.

51. Equally important was the fact that the resolution on the budget endorsed a thorough review of the Organization's information and publications policies. The Union expected the Department of Public

Information to play a leading role in those areas and to submit by the appointed time, in coordination with the managers of other departments and agencies, the requested reviews and proposals for reform. The draft resolution also contained a reference to the issue of sunset clauses. The adoption of results-based budgeting should eventually lead to a revitalization of the debate on that issue and on the timetables for the programmes and activities of the Organization. That debate should be conducted in the appropriate forum. The European Union was pleased that paragraph 30 of the draft resolution stated clearly the Committee's wish that the Secretary-General implement regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation as rigorously as possible.

52. It was also pleased that the Committee had agreed to the Professional posts proposed for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), sustainable development, the fight against terrorism, drugs and crime and the International Court of Justice. The decision not to grant all the reclassifications requested, while in some ways regrettable, should be taken as a sign of Member States' unease regarding the practices followed thus far on the matter.

53. The Union considered the establishment of an Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to be a matter of priority. It hoped that the High Representative would be appointed promptly and that the Office would be provided with all appropriate resources, inter alia, through the redeployment of staff and resources from other departments. The Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding a report on the impact of such redeployment should not prevent the prompt establishment of all elements of the new structure.

54. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed appreciation for the flexibility demonstrated by the various delegations. The Group had been flexible, too, and had accepted a number of significant reductions in the resources requested, to the extent that they did not affect mandates and priorities agreed upon by all Member States. It had sought to avoid reducing resources for specific departments when the implications of such reductions were not clear and had tried to exempt the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions from some across-the-board reductions. It was concerned about the impact that the redeployment of resources from section 11A would have on the capacity of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to fulfil its mandate in respect of the least developed, landlocked developing and small island developing countries and looked forward to receiving the report on the consequences of such redeployment. It supported the establishment of the Office of the High Representative but felt that that should not affect the operational capacities of UNCTAD.

55. The Group had also sought to emphasize the need to deal with programme budget implications in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 and rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. It had proposed the establishment of a post of ombudsman in the Office of the Secretary-General with authority in the area of the administration of justice and hoped that the position would be filled expeditiously by a competent individual with the necessary legal qualifications.

56. **Mr. Jalang'o** (Kenya) welcomed the steps taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen conference-servicing facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. During the current period, the utilization factor of such services in Nairobi had exceeded those of the Offices at Vienna and Geneva, thus confirming that Nairobi could be a viable venue for important meetings. He hoped that the remaining vacancies for Arabic and English interpreters would be filled expeditiously.

57. While there had been a modest increase in regular budget funding for UNEP and Habitat, the overall level was still far short of what was required. He appealed to the Secretary-General to make every effort to significantly increase the regular budget funding for the two bodies.

58. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation had joined in the consensus on the understanding that the level of resources approved would be sufficient to fulfil all the mandates and that, if that proved not to be so, the Committee could take steps to provide the Secretariat with the necessary resources.

59. Regarding the paragraphs of the resolution which called for revisions in some Departments, her delegation had joined the consensus on the understanding that the revisions would be administrative in nature and would be designed to enhance efficiency. Any substantive revisions would require the direct participation of the substantive organs of the Departments concerned.

60. Her delegation had joined the consensus on paragraph 30, on the understanding that any decision on the sunset clauses was a matter for the General Assembly, which had already decided not to take action on the matter, and that regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning would be implemented within the context of the budget. It would have serious reservations about any proposal that went beyond that context.

61. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) welcomed the additional posts which had been approved even though they had not been part of the Secretary-General's original proposal. The five additional posts for UNRWA reflected the international community's increased appreciation of the difficulties faced by the Palestinian refugees. He hoped that the report referred to in the last line of paragraph 124 would not contain a suggestion to the effect that documents in Arabic be issued in summary form, for it was clear that what was being requested was that all publications should be issued in full in Arabic as well.

62. **Mr. Chandra** (India) expressed satisfaction at the fact that the budget appropriations had been approved by consensus and noted that the Group of 77 and China had approached the negotiations with clarity of purpose regarding the need to provide all mandated programmes with appropriate funds, to adhere to the provisions of the Charter and of resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 and to adhere to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. His delegation had therefore been pleased to see that the Secretary-General had been requested to implement regulation 5.6 of those Regulations and Rules. He wished to place on record his appreciation for the positive approach taken by representatives of Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand and the United States. His delegation hoped that the $75 million reduction in appropriations would not lead to mandated programmes remaining unimplemented or being inadequately implemented. He expressed disappointment that some very deserving reclassifications could not be approved and that the decision on the matter had been taken, by some, in an arbitrary manner on the basis of considerations regarding expediency and, by others, on the basis of considerations that were not entirely objective.

Draft report of the Fifth Committee
(A/C.5/56/L.28 (Parts I and II))

63. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft report and invited the Committee to take a decision on the recommendations contained in Part II.

64. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) drew attention to a number of editorial changes in the draft report.

65. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) wondered whether the Advisory Committee and the Programme Planning and Budget Division had consulted one another to make sure that all the proposals had been taken into account.

66. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) noted that the Committee's decisions would be reflected in its report to the plenary Assembly. In implementing the budget, the Secretary-General would be guided by the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the additional recommendations of the Fifth Committee. He assumed that, at the end of the meeting, the Secretariat would make sure that the document reflected what had happened in the Committee.

67. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) confirmed that the Secretariat would indeed go over the figures and cross-check everything.

Draft resolution II

68. *Draft resolution II, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Draft resolution III

69. *Draft resolution III was adopted.*

Draft resolution IV

70. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

Draft resolution V

71. *Draft resolution V, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 121: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.34 and A/C.5/56/L.35)

Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 2002-2003 (A/C.5/56/L.34)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.34

72. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.34 was adopted.*

Action taken on certain items (A/C.5/56/L.35)

Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.35

73. **The Chairman** introduced draft decision A/C.5/56/L.35 and informed the Committee that the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly would be held from 4 to 15 March 2002 and the second part from 6 to 31 May 2002.

74. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, while his delegation welcomed the fact that the resumed session had been shortened, it would have to be extended if developments warranted, and it should be understood that the adoption of the draft decision was subject to the proviso that flexibility would be shown.

75. *Draft decision A/C.5/56/L.35 was adopted.*

Closure of the work of the Fifth Committee during the main part of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly

76. After an exchange of courtesies, in which **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico), on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, **Mr. Pelšs** (Latvia), on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, **Ms. Dinić** (Croatia) and **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) took part, **the Chairman** declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work for the main part of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.41

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 41st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 4 March 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Review of public information activities in the United Nations Secretariat outside the Department of Public Information

Languages used for preparation of documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

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02-27084 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/56/L.40/Rev.1)

1. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the proposed programme of work, which had been drawn up by the Bureau on the basis of legislative mandates and the availability of documents. Document A/C.5/56/L.40/Rev.1 contained the list of documents to be considered at the current part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In proposing its programme of work, the Bureau had been cognizant of the fact that a number of reports had been requested during the main part of the Assembly's fifty-sixth session for consideration by the Committee during the first part of the resumed session. The Bureau had been informed that the reports in question were currently being prepared but would not be issued in time for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, owing to the short period of time available. Accordingly, those reports had not been included in the list of documents for consideration at the current part of the resumed session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

2. **Mr. Soto** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland, said that the presentation of the Under-Secretary-General for Management on the financial situation of the United Nations should outline the expected trends in expenditure for peacekeeping operations beyond the current budget year so that Member States could plan their budget allocations more rationally.

3. With regard to the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the European Union was generally inclined to endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendations. The task of mainstreaming IMIS into the overall administration of the United Nations, however, had not been completed in the case of the International Tribunals and peacekeeping operations. All IMIS activities should be reflected and clearly explained in the context of the Organization's wider strategy in the field of information technology.

4. The European Union attached great importance to the work of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and agreed that the expansion of the Organization's humanitarian and development activities in Africa had led to increased demand for office space at ECA. The Committee should base its decision in the matter on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

5. The Union noted with regret that the report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/259 on United Nations publications had not been submitted at the current part of the resumed session of the General Assembly, but welcomed the submission by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of a number of very important reports.

6. The European Union endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the proposed budget for the International Tribunals. It was also committed to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which should be provided with adequate financial resources. On the question of the mandatory age of separation, however, it planned to seek clarification of the precise implications of any change in the age of separation before taking any decision on the matter, either at the current part of the resumed fifty-sixth session or at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

7. Lastly, the European Union was of the view that the two weeks available to the Committee for the first part of the resumed session would be more than sufficient to allow the Committee to complete its work on time and without recourse to night and weekend meetings. Moreover, given its concern at the large number of important items that had been deferred to the resumed session, consideration should be given to dispensing altogether in future years with the part of the resumed session usually held in March.

8. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, noted that a number of reports on items that were to have been taken up at the current part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the Assembly were not yet available. The Group of 77 and China would like to have an opportunity to comment on the proposed programme of work at the Committee's next meeting and therefore wished to request that action be deferred until that meeting.

9. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation shared the concerns just expressed by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China concerning the non-issuance of documents. He recalled specifically that it had been agreed to take up the report on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) at the current part of the resumed session. It was unacceptable for representatives of the Secretariat to reformulate the decisions of the General Assembly and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be called upon to explain its failure to issue the report in question.

10. **The Chairman**, in response to the request of the representative of Cuba, said that action on the proposed programme of work would be deferred to the Committee's next meeting. The Secretariat would be asked to prepare a list of those documents which the Assembly had requested and which were not yet available. Lastly, in response to the concerns raised by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, he would request a representative of the Secretariat to attend the Committee's next meeting to explain the reasons for the non-issuance of the report on UNDOF.

11. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 121: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Common services at Geneva (*continued*) (A/56/417/Rev.1)

12. **The Chairman** recalled that the report of the Secretary-General on the question of common services at Geneva (A/56/417) had been introduced and discussed in the context of the Committee's consideration of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations system common services at Geneva (A/55/856 and Add.1). A revised report of the Secretary-General had now been issued as document A/56/417/Rev.1.

13. **Mr. Gabriel** (Principal Inter-Agency Officer, United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the revised report of the Secretary-General on common services at Geneva contained in document A/56/417/Rev.1 on behalf of the secretariat of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), previously known as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), said that, in spite of the statutory autonomy of each Geneva-based specialized agency and organization, significant collaboration had developed among their executive heads, resulting in increased contact among counterparts at all levels in the various organizations. The results of those efforts were described in the report under the headings of budget and finance, telecommunications, information technology, travel and transportation, medical services and insurance, security services, procurement and contracting, library and archiving services, management of human resources, management of facilities, mail and Diplomatic Pouch services, and conference activities. In follow-up to the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), the Management Ownership Committee at Geneva had been established under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

14. Progress towards greater coordination of common services had been made in a number of areas, such as the sharing of electronic information resources through the United Nations System Consortium, and the development of coordinated approaches to the coverage of official and private travel aimed at maximizing bargaining leverage to secure the most favourable conditions and fares for all organizations.

15. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) said that it would be helpful if copies of the statement just made by the representative of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination could be made available to the members of the Committee.

16. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would continue its consideration of the item in informal consultations.

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Integrated Management Information System project (A/56/602 and Add.1 and A/56/684)

17. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), introducing the thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the Integrated Management Information System project (A/56/602 and Add.1), said that the recent implementation of IMIS for payroll processing in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its expected implementation in the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF) in March 2002 would mean that the System was in full operation at all major duty stations. Most of the difficulties encountered had been due to problems with data in earlier versions of the System. Those problems had been rectified, however, and there were currently more than 4,500 active users in United Nations offices.

18. The application had been successfully migrated to Panther software, which would allow IMIS to be enabled on the web. The consolidated database of financial records from all offices where the system was in operation had been used in the preparation of financial statements for December 2001. IMIS was also being used as the source of information for the Key Item Management Reporting System which was being implemented by the Management Policy Office. It remained the only fully integrated software application that met United Nations requirements.

19. The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the IMIS project (A/56/684) mentioned the limited progress achieved in the implementation of IMIS in peacekeeping operations and the International Tribunals. In 2001, most resources had been focused on implementing the payroll module at the major duty stations, funds and programmes. However, a pilot project had been launched in early 2002 for the deployment of IMIS in one peacekeeping operation and deployment in other field missions and in the International Tribunals was due to take place during 2002. Full deployment in all missions would require the upgrading of the system to the web version. The progress report outlined the long-term strategy for the system; work was due to begin on that basis in 2002.

20. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the Integrated Management Information System project (A/56/684), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposal contained in paragraph 66 of the thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General (A/56/602).

21. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation wished to continue discussing the reports on IMIS at the Committee's next meeting. Taking the opportunity provided by the presence of the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, he said that the cafeteria often closed before the end of the day's meetings, even though the Assistant Secretary-General had undertaken to ensure that it remained open for as long as necessary. Attempts to raise the issue with those responsible for the cafeteria sometimes elicited discourteous responses. If the required service was not being provided, alternative contractors should be considered. Some delegations would also like to know why the cafeteria near the Security Council Chamber had been closed.

22. **Mr. Chandra** (India) noted that the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services had stated that a pilot project for the implementation of IMIS had been launched in one peacekeeping operation, rather than the three that had been mentioned in the thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General. He would like to know whether the operation concerned was the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) or the United Nations Logistics Base (UNLB) at Brindisi.

23. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services) said that he would respond to the comments made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic at a subsequent meeting. IMIS had been implemented in only one peacekeeping operation because, to date, the priority had been to implement the System at the major duty stations. However, efforts were being made to achieve implementation in all peacekeeping operations as quickly as possible.

Construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa (A/56/672 and A/56/711)

24. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa (A/56/672), said that the report contained an uncontroversial proposal for the construction of additional office facilities, on which he hoped the Committee would take swift action.

25. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/711), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

Standards of accommodation for air travel (A/54/382, A/55/488, A/56/7, A/56/426 and A/56/630)

26. **Ms. Ferrena-Mahmud** (Chief of the Oversight Support Unit of the Department of Management), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel contained in documents A/54/382, A/55/488 and A/56/426, said that, during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 covered by the first report, there had been 80 exceptions to the standard for a total additional cost to the Organization of $101,939. During the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000, there had been a decrease in the number of exceptions, which had been granted mainly on grounds of medical need or to eminent persons, but overall costs had increased because of first-class travel by the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly and despite a decrease in the number of trips by security officers accompanying the Secretary-General. During the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, there had been a 14 per cent decrease in the number of exceptions granted and a 19 per cent decrease in costs. It could therefore be concluded that oversight had resulted in a decrease in the number of exceptions to the standard for air travel and in costs.

27. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/630), drew attention to the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 5 and 7 of the report.

28. **Mr. Siddiqui** (Pakistan) said that, while his delegation noted the reductions in both the number of exceptions and their cost, the total expenditure was still very high. Future reports should include the names of the individuals for whom exceptions to the standard for air travel had been made. New modalities for air travel should be explored as well, since tickets issued from capitals often cost less than tickets issued through the official travel agency. Finally, delays in reimbursement for travel were regrettable and a statement on procedures should be circulated.

Agenda item 123: Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/12, 17 and 19)

Simultaneous availability of parliamentary documentation in electronic form in the six official languages on the United Nations Web site (A/C.5/56/12)

Review of public information activities in the United Nations Secretariat outside the Department of Public Information (A/C.5/56/17)

Languages used for preparation of documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (A/C.5/56/19)

29. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the simultaneous availability of parliamentary documentation in electronic form in the six official languages on the United Nations Web site, said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/12) had been requested by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in paragraph 314 of its report on its forty-first session (A/56/16). The Advisory Committee had been informed that the Official Document System (ODS) had begun operation on 4 September 2001 as a result of the re-engineering of the optical disk system from a proprietary system to a fully web-based system using industry standard technology, such as Windows 2000, Lotus Notes, Microsoft Internet Information Server and magnetic media, which the Advisory Committee welcomed.

30. The Advisory Committee noted from paragraph 4 of the report of the Secretary-General that the Secretariat was working on the second phase of the new ODS project, which was scheduled for completion in January 2002. Once that phase was completed, the new ODS would have full multilingual support functions in the six official languages, in accordance with the rule established in General Assembly resolution 36/117 B and reiterated in resolutions 42/207 C, 50/11 and 53/208 B. Users would be able to search for documents and display them in any of the six official languages.

31. The Advisory Committee had been informed that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/211 F and with paragraph 12 of the Advisory

Committee's report contained in document A/56/475, by the end of January 2002, access to the new ODS would be provided free of charge to Member States, staff members and accredited non-governmental organizations. By the end of that year, the Secretariat would assess the feasibility of providing free access to the public and report to the General Assembly on available options and their financial implications.

32. Orally introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the review of public information activities in the United Nations Secretariat outside the Department of Public Information, he said that the Advisory Committee was of the view that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/56/17 was neither comprehensive nor fully responsive to the request for a review of public information activities. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the report.

33. Orally presenting the Advisory Committee's report on languages used for preparation of documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), he recalled that the Advisory Committee had commented on the subject in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/7, paragraph V.74). The Advisory Committee had been informed by its representatives that ESCWA did not have the capacity to translate all publications into Arabic and had expressed concern that, even though ESCWA used large amounts of resources to produce publications, the latter might not be of much use to end-users in the region because they were not always available in Arabic.

34. In its note on the subject (A/C.5/56/19), the Secretariat had concluded that the drafting and translation capacity of ESCWA for the preparation of documents and publications in Arabic appeared to be adequate. However, there was room for improvement in regard to the proportion of documents and publications issued in Arabic. The Secretary-General intended to monitor the situation closely and report on the progress achieved in the context of his proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. It was the intention of the Advisory Committee to follow up on the subject in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. In the meantime, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the note by the Secretariat.

35. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the simultaneous availability of parliamentary documentation in electronic form in the six official languages on the United Nations Web site (A/C.5/56/12), said that the Official Document System had begun operations on 4 September 2001, as a result of the re-engineering of the optical disk system from a proprietary to an open system. The second phase of the re-engineering project had been completed on 4 February 2002. The new ODS had full multilingual functionality in the six official languages, which would ensure parity among the languages.

36. The current ODS access policy was guided by General Assembly resolution 51/211 F, in which the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to develop a policy to make the ODS available on a fee-for-service basis to any interested party, on the understanding that the service would be free for Member States and Secretariat staff. Pursuant to the resolution, the Secretary-General had formulated the ODS access policy in his report entitled "Access to the optical disk system" (A/52/803).

37. The United Nations Web site was freely accessible by the public and served as an invaluable tool for dissemination of information about the various activities of the Organization. Since ODS access was currently restricted, some parliamentary documents were included on the United Nations Web site in order to satisfy the demand from non-governmental organizations and the public at large. As such, the parliamentary documents on the Web site were limited in coverage and language versions.

38. In order to ensure the simultaneous availability of parliamentary documents in the six official languages on the United Nations Web site, it would be most practical if ODS were to be made available to the public free of charge, in which case documents could be accessed from the United Nations Web site through a link to the ODS. If the Secretariat were to move forward with that technical solution, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 51/211 F, on ODS access policy would have to be changed. The Secretariat would review the feasibility of free access to the ODS and present Member States with options, including financial implications, with a view to revising the

urrent ODS subscription policy, which was guided by ssembly resolution 51/211 F.

9. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and udget Division), introducing the report of the ecretary-General on the review of public information ctivities in the United Nations Secretariat outside the epartment of Public Information (A/C.5/56/17), said hat the report had been submitted in response to a equest from the Advisory Committee for clarification f what constituted output in the area of public nformation in substantive offices and departments. he Advisory Committee had expressed dissatisfaction ith the general nature of information provided on the ctivities of a number of departments. The report had een overtaken by events, however, as the General ssembly had requested a full report on public nformation activities in the context of the proposed rogramme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, to be ubmitted at its fifty-seventh session.

0. He also introduced the note by the Secretariat on anguages used for preparation of documents and ublications of the Economic and Social Commission or Western Asia (A/C.5/56/19). While the drafting and ranslation capacity of ESCWA for the preparation of locuments and publications in Arabic appeared to be dequate, there was room for improvement in regard to he proportion of documents and publications issued in rabic. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly ad taken action reflecting that fact, and thus the report ad also been overtaken by events.

1. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the dvisory Committee's report on the languages used for he preparation of documents and publications of SCWA should be presented in writing. The note by he Secretariat showed that the Commission's drafting nd translation capacity for the preparation of locuments and publications in Arabic appeared to be dequate. Indeed, the recommendation that all locuments to be submitted to the Commission should, s far as possible, be drafted in Arabic had been made y the Commission itself. Paragraph 6 (b) of the report lso reflected an internal administrative decision of the ommission, which contradicted the General ssembly's resolution on multilingualism, according to hich command of Arabic was sufficient for mployment at ESCWA. That contradiction should be rought to the Commission's attention.

2. With reference to paragraph 9 of the report, it was egrettable that even Arabic-speaking staff members of ESCWA, which did not have any non-Arabic-speaking member States, did not submit draft documents in Arabic. It was a scandal that more documents should be drafted and produced in English than in Arabic at ESCWA and his delegation would not accept executive summaries in Arabic in lieu of a full translation of documents issued in English. That was contrary to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. At the very least, the Commission should observe the relevant Assembly resolutions on the pattern of conferences, which required the simultaneous distribution of documents in all languages. His delegation appreciated the efforts of the ESCWA secretariat to address the shortcomings with respect to drafting in Arabic and would continue to monitor the issue closely.

43. **Ms. Attwooll** (United States of America) said that her delegation was completely dissatisfied with the report of the Secretary-General on the review of public information activities (A/C.5/56/17). The report's stated goal was to look at the outputs of various departments and at possible overlap between the Department of Public Information and other departments of the Secretariat. Her delegation had been looking forward to a substantive analytical feedback, instead of a list of departments and their activities, without any analysis of their interaction with the Department of Public Information. The Department of Public Information was currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its activities and she hoped that it would re-examine the issue of its interaction with other departments in the context of that review.

44. **Mr. Yussuf** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that he would appreciate more information on the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC).

45. **Ms. Gastaut** (Director of the Public Affairs Division of the Department of Public Information) said that JUNIC was a subsidiary body of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which brought together all the information directors of the United Nations system to coordinate the system's public information policies. Following the reform of ACC, all of its subsidiary bodies had been abolished in October 2001 and more flexible and efficient mechanisms had been created. The report of the Secretary-General on the new mechanisms would be made available sometime before the session of the Committee on Information scheduled to begin on 22 April 2002.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.42

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Chairman: Mr. Orr (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Canada)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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02-27112 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana), Mr. Orr (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 130: Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/56/83, A/56/620, A/56/689, A/56/733, A/56/759 and A/56/823)

1. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) introduced a number of reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The issuance of the report entitled "Enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes, updated views" (A/56/823) had been delayed to allow for extensive consultations with funds and programmes. The report contained a summary of the responses received from funds and programmes as of 31 January 2002 and the conclusions of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on those responses. Most funds and programmes had implemented the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General dated 8 March 2001 (A/55/826) and had signed memorandums of understanding with OIOS, which had now established client profiles for all funds and programmes, including information on oversight mechanisms in place.

2. The report of OIOS on the inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) (A/56/83) complemented its reports on the triennial reviews of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) (E/AC.51/2001/4) and of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme (E/AC.51/2001/5).

3. The major strengths of ODCCP were its clear mandates, the high priority of its issues on the intergovernmental policy agenda and its broad range of expertise. Its main assets were a committed, resourceful and talented staff, a strong field presence and its ability to work multilaterally in very sensitive fields. Its major weaknesses stemmed from over-centralized and heavily personalized decision-making and the absence of institutional mechanisms to ensure that its activities and projects were properly conceived, efficiently executed and the results assessed. The inspection had found that the lack of corporate mechanisms of consultation and assessment resulted in waste of resources and hampered the efficiency of programmed activities.

4. One of the major concerns highlighted in the report was the low morale of staff. The common view was that there was no transparency in executive decisions, especially concerning personnel matters and that, while structured dialogue on work matters was maintained in some units, overall staff-management communication was not functioning. The report contained 14 recommendations on how the drawbacks observed should be corrected and the management of ODCCP had recently reported that a number of corrective measures had been recently implemented in response to those recommendations. However, since the Staff Council in Vienna had expressed reservations on the content and manner of such reporting, OIOS would reserve judgement pending an on-site review that had been tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2002.

5. He was pleased to note that the management of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) had accepted the 13 recommendations contained in the report of OIOS on inspection of the administrative and management practices of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/56/620). Some of the corrective measures that had already been taken included the scheduling of regular meetings with members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in order to ensure transparency between the management of UNON and Member States, and preparatory work on establishing service agreements with client entities at Nairobi.

6. The recommendations contained in the report of OIOS on the investigation into allegations of misconduct and mismanagement of the "boat project" at the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (A/56/689) had also been accepted and were presumably in the process of being implemented. As a result of its investigation, OIOS had recommended that appropriate action should be taken against the then Executive Director and the Officer-in-Charge of the Operations Branch for the waste of resources and mismanagement of the project. The Executive Director had been removed from office and a

reprimand issued to the Officer-in-Charge of the Operations Branch.

7. Introducing the report of OIOS on the investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling at the Nairobi Branch Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/56/733), he said that the OIOS-led international task force had spent three months in Kenya investigating allegations that some staff members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had been demanding money from refugees, asylum seekers and other persons to provide documentation and assurances of resettlement, primarily in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The task force had obtained evidence of a criminal enterprise involving UNHCR staff and contracted agents as well as persons with no connection to UNHCR. Their aim had been to cheat refugees and others by making false promises for resettlement which they had no authority to provide. Nine persons, including three UNHCR staff members, had been arrested by the Kenya Police and charged with crimes under the Penal Code of Kenya, as detailed in the report. All cases were pending in Kenyan courts, and the Kenya Police were actively pursuing other persons who had been involved in the criminal enterprise.

8. OIOS also warned that the factors which had led to the emergence of that enterprise would exist wherever the demand for resettlement by refugees exceeded the ability or willingness of Governments to grant asylum.

9. Introducing the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees private sector fund-raising activities (A/56/759), he noted that, in recent years, private sector fund-raising had become a major component of the communication strategy of UNHCR and an important element of its fund-raising efforts. UNHCR had raised $19 million from the private sector in 2001, following totals of almost of $33 million in 1999 and $15 million in 2000. OIOS was pleased to note that all of its initial findings and recommendations, which had been communicated to UNHCR in May 2001, had been satisfactorily addressed, thus meeting the audit's requirement that, in the interest of consistency and coherence, policies and procedures should be more clearly defined in some areas and further developed in others.

10. **Mr. Fujii** (Japan) said, with reference to the investigation into allegations of misconduct and mismanagement of the "boat project", that the management of ODCCP should be urgently reformed, given the amount of resources that had been wasted and the enhanced role of the Office in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September 2001. His Government therefore hoped that a new Executive Director of the highest calibre would be appointed as early as possible.

11. With reference to the investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling at the Nairobi Branch Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, another case had recently been reported in which refugees were seriously abused. His delegation would greatly appreciate information on any action to be taken by the United Nations, including OIOS to prevent further abuse anywhere in the world.

12. **Mr. Fox** (Australia) said that, as one of the resettlement destination countries targeted by the refugee smugglers, Australia had been approached by OIOS to participate in the international task force to investigate the allegations. Given the importance his Government attached to maintaining the integrity of the international protection system and of resettlement processes, it had gladly provided two experts from the Australian Department of Immigration to participate in the task force. UNHCR's actions in dealing with the matter underlined the importance of maintaining the integrity of the international protection system and of sending a strong message that resettlement places must go to those most in need rather than to those who could afford to pay for a place. His Government welcomed the recommendations of OIOS and the corrective action taken by UNHCR at Nairobi and other locations. His delegation would welcome further reporting to the appropriate organs on the implementation of the recommendations and on follow-up action.

13. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) noted that, in paragraphs 13-16 of the report on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes, updated views (A/56/823), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had been quoted as stating that it did not consider it necessary to establish an oversight committee, as recommended in the report, since it already had its Audit Committee, and that it did not "anticipate additional external participation on the Committee". OIOS, however, surely had oversight responsibilities for all funds and programmes and it

would therefore be helpful if a UNICEF representative could explain to the Fifth Committee in what sense the OIOS could be regarded as "external".

14. **Mr. Chandra** (India) expressed dismay at the use of the word "warned", as applied to Member States in the Under-Secretary-General's statement on the report contained in document A/56/733. Softer language should have been used. Secondly, he would welcome clarification of the phrase "new procedures for implementing staff rule 112.3, once those procedures were finalized", in relation to the recovery of losses incurred at the Nairobi Branch Office. Lastly, he wished to point out that, physically speaking, the Office of Internal Oversight Services was indeed external to UNICEF.

15. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) recalled that the report on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes, updated views had been prepared in response to the Fifth Committee's concern about how oversight was carried out in such bodies. One conclusion had been that the establishment of oversight committees would be helpful, particularly in cases where funds and programmes did not have their own audit committees. The idea was by no means new: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, despite having an Audit Committee, had also set up an oversight committee, of which he himself was a member. It had proved a most useful model. UNDP had been invited to sit on the UNICEF Audit Committee, in fulfilment of the need for external representation. It would, however, make more sense for his own Office to be directly represented. The matter was under negotiation.

16. In reply to the question raised by the representative of India, the phrase meant that the staff rule in question was under review and it had therefore been decided to wait until the review was completed before pursuing any recovery of losses.

17. The word "warned" should be regarded as applying to the United Nations itself and not to Member States. When the demand for resettlement places exceeded the supply, there was inevitably a risk that the problems addressed in the report would arise. It was therefore incumbent on the Organization to be vigilant and to ensure that measures were put in place to prevent any abuses.

Agenda item 125: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/56/767 and A/C.5/56/35)

18. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 18 January 2002 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/56/35) transmitting, for appropriate action by the Committee, a letter dated 27 December 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, contained in document A/56/767. The Group of 77 and China was currently holding consultations on the matter. He therefore proposed that the Committee should revert to the matter at a later stage of the resumed session of the General Assembly.

19. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/56/SR.43

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Summary record of the 43rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 March 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
later:	Mr. Bhattarai (Vice-Chairman)	(Nepal)
later:	Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Chairman)	(Ghana)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Other matters

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02-27191 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/56/L.40/Rev.1)

1. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, stressed that the late submission of documents disrupted the smooth functioning of the Committee. Indeed, some items that were to be considered during the first part of the Assembly's resumed session had had to be eliminated from the agenda. The Committee had not been provided with all the relevant reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in writing and lacked complete documentation for a number of items scheduled for consideration that week. The Group of 77 and China noted with concern that reports that had been requested under General Assembly resolutions had not been prepared by the Secretariat and were not even included in the programme of work. The Secretariat should provide an explanation for the late issuance, or non-issuance, of documentation. The Group of 77 and China reiterated their request to have that chronic problem addressed seriously in order to ensure that the Secretariat complied with the six-week rule reaffirmed every year by the General Assembly. In that context, they stressed the need for implementation of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 54/248 and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

2. The Group of 77 and China requested that recently announced cutbacks in conference and other support services should be considered under agenda item 123 on the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The Group intended to make a statement on that important question, which was having a negative impact on the work of the Organization and in particular, on its own functioning.

3. With regard to human resources management, if the Under-Secretary-General for Management would be briefing the Fifth Committee on the financial situation of the United Nations, he should do so during the current week in order to afford delegations an opportunity to make their comments the following week, in accordance with the usual practice. The Group of 77 and China concurred with the views expressed by the European Union on the importance of the issue and trusted that the current procedure would be followed in dealing with it.

4. The Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa (A/56/672) and the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/711). The relocation of the regional, subregional and country offices of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes in Addis Ababa and the expansion of the Organization's humanitarian and development activities in the region had led to increased demand for office space. Since a delay in approving the funds might lead to higher costs in the long run, as indicated in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/711, para. 8), a decision on the issue should be based on the Secretary-General's proposals, with which the Advisory Committee had concurred.

5. With regard to standards of accommodation for air travel, she stressed the importance of the modalities of issuance and reimbursement of airline tickets. Many delegations had noticed that tickets purchased from their capitals cost much less than those arranged by the Secretariat through its designated travel agencies. The Group of 77 and China wished to see a detailed statement showing the difference in the cost of airline tickets issued by the designated agency and those available in various capitals. The Group had also noted with regret undue delays in the reimbursement of tickets not purchased through the designated travel agency and would appreciate information on procedures for reimbursement and suggestions for improvement. In that connection, it supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on standards of accommodation for air travel.

6. The Group attached particular importance to the items on financing of the two International Tribunals and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), gratis personnel, and the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), and trusted that the Committee would give them proper consideration. The Group would be prepared to consider the report on public information activities in the context of the comprehensive review to be undertaken at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

7. The Group would appreciate additional information on the arrears of the former Yugoslavia under the agenda item on the scale of assessments and would be interested in other delegations' views on how

to deal with the issue, taking into account its political, legal and technical dimensions.

8. **Mr. Lizano** (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Group associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and supported the proposed programme of work.

9. It was regrettable to note, once again, the adverse impact on the Committee's work of delays in the issuance of documents and reports. Although in many cases the volume of documentation posed problems, the Secretariat must take appropriate steps to remedy the situation.

10. The report on agenda item 125 lacked specific recommendations and information that might make it possible to take informed decisions. In relation to item 126, the report on the mandatory age of separation was not sufficiently detailed; it might be appropriate to take up that issue in conjunction with other pending reports. With regard to items 131 and 132, the Rio Group attached particular importance to the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and supported the need for appropriate financing; it hoped that the final budgets would be adopted at the current part of the resumed session, so as not to impede the operation of the Tribunals.

11. In relation to item 130, the Rio Group stressed the importance of an appropriate internal oversight mechanism in the Organization and the need for follow-up to the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and for prompt implementation of its recommendations. In relation to item 158, the Rio Group attached great importance to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and stressed the need to approve adequate resources.

12. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and endorsed the need to take concrete measures to deal with the problem of the late issuance of documents. It was unacceptable that the Committee's programme of work should be determined by the status of preparedness of documentation, thereby making the Committee a hostage of the Secretariat. It had become standard practice for documents to be submitted late.

13. His delegation attached great importance to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), and regretted the Secretariat's failure to comply with the General Assembly's request for a report to be submitted at the current part of the Assembly's resumed session. Before approving its programme of work, the Committee should devote an entire meeting to the issue of the late issuance of documents, with the presence of representatives of the departments concerned.

14. His delegation agreed that the Committee needed to give in-depth consideration to the question of the reduction of the budget for conference services.

15. **Ms. Martin** (Officer-in-Charge of the Personnel Management and Support Service, Department of Peacekeeping Operations), responding to the inquiry by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, said that the Secretary-General would submit a report in compliance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 54/266 and paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 55/264. The review of the matter had not yet been completed; once completed, a full report would be made to the General Assembly.

16. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation was well aware that the issue had been raised in the General Assembly resolutions mentioned; normally, the Secretary-General would be expected to respond to all questions raised by the General Assembly. His delegation had hoped to receive the report on UNDOF at the main part of the Assembly's fifty-sixth session, but had shown flexibility in agreeing for it to be submitted at the first part of the resumed session. It was incomprehensible that a report only two or three pages long would take over 10 months to complete. While documents that were of interest to the Secretariat were produced expeditiously, documents that were of interest to delegations were subject to delay. The Secretariat must provide a convincing response as to why it was not implementing General Assembly resolutions. It was not enough to say that a report would be provided.

17. **Ms. Brzak-Metzler** (Chief of the Compensation and Classification Policy Unit, Office of Human Resources Management), referring to the issue raised by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the conditions of service of locally recruited staff at UNDOF, said that the Policy Unit had been requested to provide input to the report on

UNDOF. It had taken a number of measures and was engaged in discussions with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations aimed at finding a solution to the problem.

18. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had asked a specific question as to why, after 10 months, a report had still not been submitted. If the Secretariat was unable to respond, he would demand an investigation.

19. **The Chairman** said that the concerns of the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic had been noted.

20. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation had asked some questions to which it wanted answers. It sought additional information about the tentative dates of issuance of the reports of the Advisory Committee on those reports of the Secretary-General that had been issued, and, in cases where the Advisory Committee's reports had been issued, an explanation of why they were not being taken up at the current part of the resumed session.

21. *Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 130: Reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (*continued*) (A/56/83, A/56/620, A/56/689, A/56/733, A/56/759 and A/56/823)

22. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), replying to questions asked at the previous meeting, said, with reference to the question raised by the representative of Japan concerning allegations of abuse of refugee children in some West African countries, that OIOS was currently investigating those allegations and was therefore not at liberty to comment on them.

23. On the question raised by the representative of Australia, OIOS would monitor the refugee smuggling issue with a view to providing updates. The comments made by the United States representative had been relayed to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and an official would appear before the Committee.

24. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said, with reference to the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes, updated views (A/56/823), that his delegation was pleased to note that various funds and programmes had implemented the recommendations of OIOS. He sought clarification of the phrase "joint horizontal audit" in paragraph 20.

25. His delegation welcomed the thorough report on the investigation into allegations of misconduct and mismanagement of the "boat project" at the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) (A/56/689), although it had hoped to have the report before the budget negotiations the previous fall. The indications of mismanagement and waste of resources at ODCCP were disturbing and it would therefore be interesting to know whether recommendations 4 to 7 had been implemented since the report was issued. He would also like to know whether the low staff morale mentioned in the report on the inspection of programme management and administrative practices in ODCCP (A/56/83) had improved.

26. His delegation was concerned that the investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling at the Nairobi Branch Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (A/56/733) had uncovered serious problems, but it commended OIOS for its quick response and innovative approach in assembling an international task force to handle the investigation. Since the pressures that had originally created the problem remained, in Kenya and other areas, such as West Africa, his delegation looked forward to follow-up reports and laid particular stress on recommendation 6, whereby the UNHCR Inspector General should establish a procedure for speedy referral to OIOS of information obtained via the external reporting process relating to UNHCR staff wrongdoing.

27. With regard to the report on the inspection of the administrative and management practices of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/56/620), his delegation would welcome an update on the status of the recommendation in paragraph 79 that the Office of Human Resources Management should undertake a review of the current human resources situation in Nairobi and prepare a paper for consideration by the Secretary-General. Some innovative thinking would be required to overcome the chronic problems in recruiting staff for Nairobi and other locations where staff seemed reluctant to go.

28. The interesting report on the audit of UNHCR private sector fund-raising activities (A/56/759) raised the question of whether OIOS had done work on private sector fund-raising by other organizations in the United Nations system and whether any systemic issues were involved.

29. *Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

30. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the news that measures were being taken to correct the issues addressed in the inspection of the administrative and management practices of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) (A/56/620). The Group was deeply concerned about the high level of post vacancies, especially at higher staffing levels, not only at Nairobi but also at other African duty stations, and would like to know what ideas OIOS might have on how to resolve that chronic situation, which had been the subject of many General Assembly resolutions. The Group strongly concurred with the view expressed by OIOS in paragraph 56 of its report that there was no basis for the current split between regular and extrabudgetary funding of posts. It supported the recommendation in paragraph 79 that the Office of Human Resources Management should be asked to undertake a review and prepare a paper on the human resources situation at UNON and would like the same to be done for other African duty stations. More broadly speaking, despite General Assembly resolution 52/220, the increase in the regular budget component for the biennium 2002-2003 still did not bring the ratio of regular budget to extrabudgetary funding for UNON into line with the ratios for the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna.

31. **Ms. Chebomui** (Kenya) said that her delegation supported the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States. The OIOS report on the inspection of the administrative and management practices of UNON (A/56/620) provided a clear diagnosis of the problems hampering delivery of quality services. Concerted pragmatic measures were required to bring the operational structure of UNON into line with those at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. Her delegation concurred with the conclusions and with all of the recommendations contained in the report. She would appreciate clarification of the purpose of the suggestion in paragraph 79 that the compensation packages given by other Kenya-based multinational and international organizations should be analysed.

32. Her delegation strongly urged the implementation of all recommendations contained in the report on the investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling at the Nairobi Branch Office of UNHCR (A/56/733). Kenya was thankful for its relative peace and security that made it a haven for refugees, but there was no doubt that the massive influx of refugees was having a serious impact on the country in the form of increased small arms trafficking and the resulting violent crime, as well as both drug and refugee smuggling. Kenya was fully committed to combating the inhuman crime of refugee smuggling. Some of those involved had already been arrested, but it was clear that a wide network was involved, and diligent police efforts would continue.

33. **Ms. Sanchez Lorenzo** (Cuba), said that the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (A/56/823) raised several concerns. The intent of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B was that OIOS should assist the operational funds and programmes in enhancing their internal oversight mechanisms, not that it should itself become a mandatory oversight mechanism for them. Moreover, by resolution 54/244, the General Assembly had decided to review the question after receiving an updated report. Her delegation considered it inappropriate that most entities had implemented the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in that report (A/55/826 and Corr.1), when the report had not yet been endorsed by the General Assembly. Since it appeared that OIOS was imposing the mechanism of oversight committees on the funds and programmes, contrary to the spirit and letter of resolution 48/218 B, she would appreciate clarification as to how the Secretariat intended to proceed with those entities that preferred to rely on their current audit mechanisms. Her delegation would like to take up the entire issue in informal consultations.

34. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation endorsed the statements of Morocco and Kenya. With regard to the report on the investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling (A/56/733), he would like clarification of what it had cost to enlist the help of outside investigators. Perusal of the OIOS report on the administrative and management practices of UNON (A/56/620) had raised the question of whether a uniform approach should be followed in

reviewing the management of all United Nations entities. His delegation strongly approved the recommendation in paragraph 73 (b) that a Protocol Officer should be designated at UNON. It also welcomed the recommendation in paragraph 79 that a report should be prepared on options for helping UNON to achieve the same status as other United Nations headquarters duty stations, but would like to know what options OIOS might suggest. Although a policy of enforced mobility between duty stations might be a means of resolving UNON staffing problems, it was surely not the sole or necessarily the best solution. The option of incentives should definitely be considered as part of a multi-pronged approach.

35. The report on the audit of UNHCR private sector fund-raising activities (A/56/759) did not include recommendations, although paragraph 25 alluded to the positive steps taken by UNHCR to implement the OIOS recommendations. Once completed, the UNHCR revised guidelines should be followed up. He wished to remind OIOS to place recommendations in bold type in all reports, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

36. His delegation agreed with the representative of Cuba that the role of OIOS in enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (A/56/823) required further consultations. He would be interested to know whether the Joint Inspection Unit had any ideas and recommendations on oversight in the funds and programmes and would appreciate further details about the oversight function in the Office of the Iraq Programme.

37. On the topic of delayed reports, OIOS should explain the reasons for the delay in the issuance of the report on possible racial discrimination in the United Nations and carry out an investigation of the reasons for the delay in the submission of the report on UNDOF.

38. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said that his delegation welcomed the report on the investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling at the Nairobi Branch Office of UNHCR (A/56/733). The investigation had entailed a unique and innovative partnership among Member States and the Secretariat, to which Canada had contributed. Follow-up by UNHCR and Kenyan authorities was essential. His delegation urged senior management of UNHCR to urgently implement a plan of action for addressing corruption at its Nairobi Branch Office and to draw the lessons that might be applicable to its other resettlement operations worldwide. The report had revealed serious deficiencies that must be urgently addressed with sufficient staff and funding, and UNHCR must continue to report to its Executive Committee on implementation of the recommendations.

39. *Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana) resumed the Chair.*

40. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that his delegation supported the statement by Morocco on behalf of the Group of African States. He welcomed the effective and decisive measures taken by OIOS following its investigation into allegations of refugee smuggling at the Nairobi Branch Office of UNHCR (A/56/733), and paid tribute to the investigators whose efforts had led to the demise of that criminal network. The recommendations contained in the report should address those problems effectively, and OIOS should follow up on their implementation.

41. **Mr. Andreasen** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), in reply to a query from the delegation of the United States of America concerning the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (A/56/823), said that it had been decided that there was no need to add an additional layer to the oversight structure of UNICEF. Existing mechanisms, which included an Oversight Committee and an Office of Internal Audit reporting regularly to the Executive Board, enabled the Executive Director to discharge properly her oversight responsibility. In 1999, the Board of Auditors had recommended that an external representative should be added to the Audit Committee, and, in response, the Chief Auditor of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been invited to sit on the Committee. As a field-based organization like UNICEF, UNDP could share useful information on best practices. The quality assurance review which had been commissioned had agreed that adding an external member to the Audit Committee had been a significant step and there was therefore no reason to add an additional oversight committee.

42. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation appreciated the information provided by the representative of UNICEF. It agreed that there was no need to establish a new oversight committee, but believed that UNICEF could benefit if OIOS was

represented on the Audit Committee. As a major donor to UNICEF, his Government had supported and would continue to support all efforts to improve its oversight.

43. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), responding to questions and comments from the Committee, said that a joint horizontal audit of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund was under way, and that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) faced similar issues, including delays in receiving pensions, which it hoped would be resolved by the audit. Cooperation between funds and programmes in such areas was increasing and OIOS envisaged more interaction.

44. With regard to recommendation 4 on the so-called "boat project" (A/56/689), the captain's offer to repay $15,000 to mitigate the loss had been withdrawn. The Acting Executive Director of ODCPP had implemented many of the report's recommendations and OIOS would reserve judgement until the follow-on inspection was completed later in the year. The question of morale at Vienna was taken very seriously and visits by the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General to the Office had helped to improve the situation.

45. On the question of refugee smuggling, in response to recommendation 6 in the report of OIOS (A/56/733), procedures for referral and a framework of operations had been put into place so that any future problems would be referred to OIOS expeditiously. An in-depth study of human resources management at Nairobi was needed, and the reason for including multinational corporations in that study would be to see what they had done to attract staff to their offices in Nairobi. Unless the high vacancy rate at that Office could be overcome, other problems would arise. He agreed with the representative of Morocco on the need to increase regular budget funding for activities at Nairobi. With regard to private sector fund-raising by UNHCR and other agencies, OIOS could bring its own experience to bear through its membership in their oversight committees.

46. In response to the statement of Cuba that OIOS had overstepped its mandate by preparing its report on the funds and programmes, the Office had been asked to determine how those bodies could strengthen their oversight. Ultimate responsibility lay with Member States and the Secretary-General for their operation, but the first step in improving their operations was to ensure that appropriate oversight structures were in place, which was within the mandate of OIOS. The Office was not taking over responsibility for their oversight, but simply providing knowledge and expertise.

47. In reply to the Syrian Arab Republic, the cost of the investigation into refugee smuggling had been borne by the countries supplying the investigators. OIOS worked in close consultation with the Joint Inspection Unit, and conducted a number of joint projects, including an audit of the peacekeeping operation in East Timor. An audit of the Office of the Iraq Programme was in progress and thus far no problems had been encountered. The report on racial discrimination in the United Nations was in preparation and should be completed for the part of the Assembly's next resumed session.

48. **Mr. Yussuf** (United Republic of Tanzania), referring to document A/56/759, paragraph 8, inquired whether the funds used by UNHCR as its initial investment in fund-raising came from the regular budget.

49. **Ms. Sánchez Lorenzo** (Cuba) said that her delegation was concerned that the Secretary-General, in document A/56/823, was asking organizations to implement recommendations which had not been approved or endorsed by the General Assembly. Even though the Secretary-General bore ultimate responsibility for the performance of the funds and programmes, that did not mean that OIOS should provide oversight. She would like to know how OIOS would be involved in the oversight committees of those organizations and whether they would be forced to accept its presence.

50. **Mr. Ahmed** (Iraq), referring to document A/56/823, paragraph 28, said that his delegation would like to see the memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be concluded between the Office of the Iraq Programme and OIOS.

51. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation was aware that racial discrimination in the United Nations was a sensitive issue which must be treated with caution and depth. It understood the difficulty in issuing a report, but stressed its urgency. Applying a double standard would not be beneficial to anyone.

52. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), replying to Committee members' additional questions, said, in response to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, that, since money was fungible, he saw no problem in using funds as seed money for a new project, provided that the account from which they were taken was reimbursed in a kind of revolving fund arrangement.

53. In response to the question by the representative of Cuba concerning the implementation of certain recommendations before they were submitted to the General Assembly, he said that his Office's recommendations did not usually involve major policy decisions, which would indeed go before the Secretary-General or the Fifth Committee, but rather steps to be taken in order to ensure compliance with auditing standards or proper procedure. Most of the time, recommendations had to be acted upon as soon as possible and put in place as soon as possible, especially where a loss of money or control was at stake. In reply to the Cuban delegation's second question, he said that the funds and programmes were in no way coerced into following the recommendations of OIOS, but rather were encouraged to adopt them for their own benefit. Indeed, most funds and programmes had opted to implement the recommendations and, not having the capacity to carry out their own investigations, had appointed oversight committees; all of them had signed MOUs.

54. In response to the question by the representative of Iraq, he defined MOUs as simple documents in which an agency, fund or programme agreed that OIOS should be reimbursed at cost for its investigative services. The Office preferred to have seed money upfront and to perform the necessary accounting operations to ensure that payment was equal to the cost it had incurred in carrying out the investigation.

55. He took note of the comments of the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and would consider them in order to determine how his Office could assist.

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Revised estimates resulting from the strengthening of the role of internal oversight services at the International Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/C.5/56/30/Add.1)

56. **Mr. Persaud** (Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/30/Add.1) on behalf of the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division. Initial estimates for the strengthening of the role of internal oversight services at the International Tribunals were for the appointment of six internal oversight auditors and investigators for the six-month period beginning on 1 January 2002.

57. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 56/247 and 56/248, had approved the requirements that had been proposed in the initial revised estimates, subject to further review at its resumed fifty-sixth session. In the document before the Committee, resources in the amount of $430,300 gross ($312,700 net) and $493,300 gross ($398,800 net) were being requested for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Tribunal for Rwanda, respectively, in order to continue oversight services for the remainder of the biennium. Two resident auditors would be in posts by 15 March, one in each Tribunal, and the remainder were expected to begin work in early April 2002. Accordingly, resources were being requested for a period of 15 months for each Tribunal. Subject to the concurrence of the Fifth Committee, the additional requirements would be included in the revised appropriations for the Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003.

58. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposals.

59. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) agreed with the representative of Cuba that the Advisory Committee's reports should be submitted to the Committee in all the official languages of the Organization and wondered how the Committee would be able to take note of a recommendation that was not in writing. He would have further comments to make on the matter when the Committee next considered the item.

60. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that, since his delegation attached importance to oversight in the two Tribunals, particularly in view of their ballooning budgets, it had gone along with the consensus in December to approve additional expenditures for oversight functions and would work for another consensus on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

61. **Ms. Sánchez Lorenzo** (Cuba) supported the remarks of the Syrian representative. Cuba had always stressed the need to have the reports of the Advisory Committee in writing.

62. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) reiterated that he had conveyed to the Fifth Committee orally that the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposal and trusted that the interpretation had been accurate.

63. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) reassured Mr. Mselle that his delegation had fully understand his initial statement. He hoped the Chairman of the Advisory Committee would understood the fact that his delegation had complained repeatedly about that issue and noted that the representative of the Group of 77 and China had just complained about Advisory Committee recommendations that were not in writing. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had a great deal of experience and should know that it was not proper to give recommendations orally, a procedure which had never been accepted by either the plenary Assembly or the Fifth Committee. If there was a resolution that allowed reports to be submitted orally and prohibited their submission in writing, he would like to know about it.

64. **The Chairman** said that the comments of the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic had been noted.

Other matters

65. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that late issuance of documentation was a chronic and very serious problem. The Committee would consider the item on MONUC in two days and still did not have the related report of the Advisory Committee. Morocco attached particular importance to MONUC and did not see how the item could be fully considered without complete documentation.

66. **The Chairman** said that the Bureau would be discussing the issue of documentation that afternoon.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

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Summary record of the 44th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Organization of work

1. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, said that the proposed programme of work seemed to indicate a change in the procedure for discussion of reports. She would like to know why the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), which had been requested at the previous session, were not being considered and when their consideration would be scheduled.

2. **The Chairman** said that the changes in the proposed programme of work were exceptions because of the short time available at the current part of the Assembly's fifty-sixth session and were not meant to set a precedent.

3. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) noted that no discussion had been scheduled on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). He wished to express his delegation's dissatisfaction with the late issuance of reports, which in some cases appeared to be premeditated.

4. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee approved the proposed programme of work for the first part of the resumed session, on the understanding that adjustments would be made, as necessary, during the course of the session.

5. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Integrated Management Information System project (*continued*) (A/56/602 and Add.1 and A/56/684)

6. **The Chairman** drew attention to the thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the Integrated Management Information System project contained in documents A/56/602 and Add.1 and A/56/684 and proposed that the item be referred to the informal consultations.

7. *It was so decided.*

Construction of additional office facilities at Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa (*continued*) (A/56/672 and A/56/711)

8. **The Chairman**, in the absence of any statements, proposed that consideration of the item be taken up in informal consultations.

9. *It was so decided.*

Standards of accommodation for air travel (*continued*) (A/54/382, A/55/488, A/56/7, A/56/426 and A/56/630)

10. **Ms. Ferrena-Mahmud** (Chief of the Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management), responding to earlier questions from the representative of Pakistan regarding exceptions to the standards of accommodation for air travel, said that the number of exceptions and their cost had decreased over the years, mainly as a result of controls and administrative oversight. However, it was not possible to predict the need for exceptions on medical grounds or for eminent persons, which varied from year to year according to circumstances. The practice had been to omit from the report the names of individuals who had been granted exceptions on medical grounds out of concern for their privacy.

11. **Mr. Bronner** (Chief of the Travel and Transportation Service, Office of Central Support Services), in answer to earlier questions regarding reimbursement, said that the Office of Central Support Services (OCSS) tried to identify the lowest airfares available from Headquarters. If a lower fare was available locally, the traveller could purchase the ticket and be reimbursed, usually during the stay at Headquarters if all documentation was available. While the time needed to process a claim had recently been reduced, some delays still occurred in receiving the necessary authorizations. Further details on procedures could be provided on request. The Office would also be grateful if lower local airfares were brought to its attention.

12. **The Chairman** said that the item would be taken up in informal consultations the following day.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Simultaneous availability of parliamentary documentation in electronic form in the six official languages on the United Nations web site (A/C.5/56/12)

Review of public information activities in the United Nations Secretariat outside the Department of Public Information (A/C.5/56/17)

Languages used for preparation of documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (A/C.5/56/19)

13. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked why parliamentary documentation in the six official languages was not simultaneously available on the United Nations web site, despite assurances that it would be.

14. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that his delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that public information activities in the Secretariat outside the Department of Public Information should be included in the comprehensive review of such activities to take place at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

15. **Mr. Blinder** (Director of the Information Technology Services Division, Office of Central Support Services) said that the Official Document System (ODS) had the capability to store and provide access to documents in all six official languages simultaneously. The availability of documents on the web site, however, was a different matter. Public access to the ODS, which was governed by General Assembly resolution 51/211 F, was on a fee-for-service basis. In his report (A/C.5/56/12), the Secretary-General proposed that the restriction on access should be lifted to allow links from the web sites to ODS. All documents stored would then be available through the United Nations web site.

16. **Mr. Oduyemi** (Executive Officer, Department of Public Information) said that the comments regarding information activities outside the Department and the concerns of ACABQ would be taken into account in the preparation of the comprehensive review of public information activities that was currently under way under the coordination of the Deputy Secretary-General.

17. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic), noting that General Assembly resolution 56/242 called for distribution of documents simultaneously in all six official languages, asked whether the Administration had taken the necessary measures to comply with that requirement. The report on the review of public information activities in the United Nations Secretariat outside the Department of Public Information (A/C.5/56/17) should have provided more details of the language-related aspects of those activities. For example, most of the information on the web site of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was in English, even though the Commission's target groups were mainly Arabic-speaking.

18. **Mr. Chandra** (India), acknowledging the efforts of the Department of Public Information to streamline the Organization's publications, requested that the Department inform the Committee on Information when its review was ready so that the Committee on Information could consider it. The Fifth Committee would act in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee on Information.

19. **Mr. Blinder** (Director of the Information Technology Services Division, Office of Central Support Services) said that the full multilingual version of the Official Document System (ODS) had been in operation since 4 February 2002 and that documents should be available in the system simultaneously in all six official languages. However, he would find out whether there had been problems regarding availability in any particular language.

20. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, expressed deep concern about the information circular on budget constraints and support service reductions (ST/IC/2002/13). Some of the measures outlined in the circular were in contravention of General Assembly resolutions 56/254 on the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 and 56/242 on pattern of conferences, as well as of other relevant resolutions, rules and regulations. The General Assembly had rejected proposals to cut back services, particularly conference services, which directly affected Member States and regional groups and which were necessary if the increasing demands of the Organization's work were to be met. The service reductions outlined in the circular were an inappropriate reaction to the cuts in the budget, yet the

budget decision of the General Assembly was being cited to justify the reductions.

21. No distinction should be drawn between the General Assembly and the Main Committees in terms of conference services. Reductions in services for the Main Committees would compromise the work of the General Assembly and weaken the Assembly in relation to the other principal organs of the United Nations. The measures outlined in the circular, which disregarded the validity of current practice for the provision of conference services and had been put in place without the approval of the General Assembly, had already resulted in the cancellation of several meetings of the Group of 77 and China.

22. Even though it had supported the proposals of the Secretary-General in the budget negotiations, the Group of 77 and China remained concerned about the negative impact of arbitrary cutbacks on the Organization's mandated activities resulting from the policies of zero nominal growth and zero real growth. The current situation was not justified, despite the fact that it was partly a result of the budget cuts, and, should it continue, it would hamper the ability of the Group of 77 and China and other regional groups to contribute effectively to forthcoming summits and meetings of United Nations bodies. Given the international and multilateral character of the Organization and the equal rights of all Member States, such a situation would be unacceptable. A representative of the Secretariat should urgently clarify the situation and those service reductions already in place which directly affected Member States should be reversed immediately. The issue should also be discussed further in informal consultations.

23. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic), endorsing the statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the service reductions had resulted in a lower level of heating in the building, which could put people at risk of illness. Both Secretariat staff and Member States were concerned about the situation. The information circular detailing the reductions was unacceptable and infringed upon the authority of the General Assembly. Indeed, the language it employed was much stronger than that agreed upon by the General Assembly after its lengthy discussions on resolution 56/242. His delegation would not accept the continuation of the service reductions or any other cutbacks, particularly those which affected the Integrated Management System (IMIS), ODS or electronic mail.

24. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that, in introducing his proposed total budget of some $2.7 billion some months previously, the Secretary-General had made it clear that further cuts in the budget would compromise the Secretariat's ability to deliver the services expected of it. However, following the Advisory Committee's review of the Secretary-General's proposals and the unanimous recommendation of the Fifth Committee, the General Assembly had approved a budget of $2.625 billion and had stipulated cuts in specific operational areas which seemed to have no programmatic or analytical justification. The Secretariat was obliged to work within the limits of that budget and, since the General Assembly had also reaffirmed that there should be no deliberate management decisions to keep posts vacant in order to achieve budgetary savings, the Secretariat had been unable to identify any areas where savings could be made other than those outlined in the information circular.

25. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, agreed with the Controller that the impact on the budget of decisions made by Member States needed to be given some thought. Nonetheless, the measures which had been put in place were not justified. Even though the General Assembly had indicated clearly that there should be no cuts in areas such as conference services that directly affected Member States, there seemed to be a deliberate intention to make cuts in those very areas. The negative impact on the functioning of the General Assembly and the work of regional groups was not a technical but a political matter. Given that the biennium 2002-2003 was only just beginning, it was difficult to understand why cuts in services were already being made. A more detailed explanation was required and, in the meantime, those services that directly affected the work of Member States should be restored immediately.

26. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Member States had drawn on the Secretariat's expertise in their discussions on the budget and the Secretariat had joined in the consensus. The Secretariat should have informed Member States during the discussions that the proposed budget cuts would result in the specific service reductions outlined in the information circular. Those service reductions were selective and

imbalanced. Moreover, it had been agreed that the same level of cuts would be applied to every department. To his knowledge, the budget of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services for the current biennium was not significantly lower than for the previous biennium. The Controller should provide the Committee with the relevant figures so that a comparison could be made in informal consultations.

Agenda item 131: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 132: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Revised estimates resulting from the strengthening of the role of internal oversight services at the International Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003 (continued) (A/C.5/56/30/Add.1)

27. **The Chairman** said that, in the absence of any comments, he would take it that the Committee wished to conclude its general discussion of the revised estimates resulting from the strengthening of the role of internal oversight services at the International Tribunals for the biennium 2002-2003 contained in document A/C.5/56/30/Add.1.

28. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.